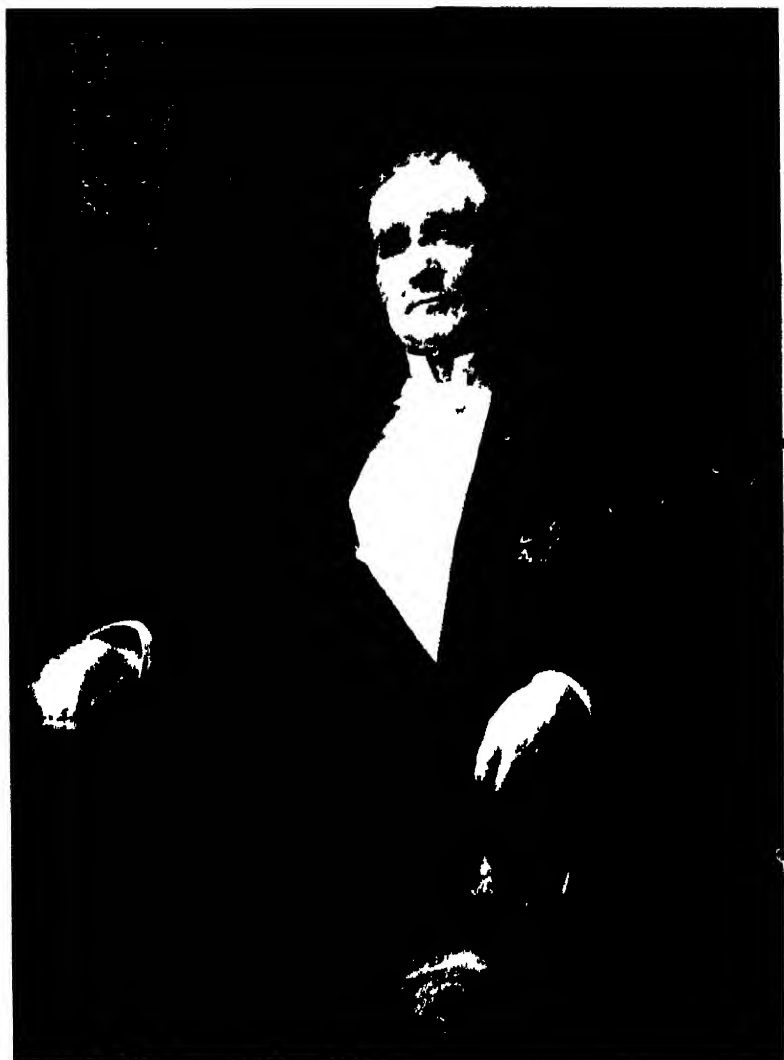


*The Life of Henry Hartley Fowler,
First Viscount Wolverhampton, G.C.S.I.*



From the Painting by Arthur Cope P.A.

The Life of Henry Hartley Fowler, First Viscount Wolverhampton, G.C.S.I.

By His Daughter Edith Henrietta Fowler
(Hon. Mrs. Robert Hamilton)

*"Remember all
He spoke among you, and the man who spoke,
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power.
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life,
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right."*

TENNYSON

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW :: :: 1912

TO
MY LITTLE SONS,
GAVIN ~~ROBERT~~ FOWLER HAMILTON
AND
HENRY FOWLER HEW HAMILTON,
I DEDICATE THIS RECORD OF THEIR
GRANDFATHER'S LIFE,
IN THE HOPE THAT THEY MAY GROW UP TO
FIND IN IT NOT ONLY AN HONOURABLE
HERITAGE BUT A NOBLE EXAMPLE.

PREFACE

BEFORE leaving my book in the hands of the public, there are one or two points which I should like to make clear.

First,—I have tried in this biography to let my father's voice be heard again, to let him tell, as far as possible, the story of his own life, and to keep my part of the work subservient to the living power of his words. For there are many, I feel sure, who will like to hear and to keep the expression of his judgments, his counsels and his aims.

Secondly,—I have not attempted here to write a political history that has been done already, and will again be done by the historian's pen. I have only touched on events which were a background to my father's personality, and, therefore, the sense of proportion is sacrificed to that of perspective.

And thirdly,—No one of all my critics is so sensible of the many faults and failings of this book as is its author. No one knows better than I do how differently the artist would have painted Henry Fowler's portrait in literary colours that could not fade, or the sculptor hewn out a statue of his statesmanship which would have stood throughout history. But all I have to give the public is a collection of amateur snapshots, which, though of no value in themselves, yet show the man as he was at home, and in all the simple, natural attitudes of mind which the historian could not see, and, even if he did, would never deign to portray. Because I was my father's daughter I can beckon my readers into a real intimacy with him, and I do so, asking them to forgive, for the sake of the worthiness of the subject of this book, the unworthiness of its writer.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have so kindly helped me by their contributions and the loan of letters; and to express my special thanks to my husband, who, by reading through and sorting out the immense masses of material, has relieved me of the heaviest half of the work.

EDITH HENRIETTA HAMILTON.

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THE LIFE OF HENRY HARTLEY FOWLER, VISCOUNT WOLVERHAMPTON

CHAPTER I,

1830—1851

IN THE DAYS OF HIS YOUTH

"Machinery just meant
To give the soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."

R. BROWNING.

THERE was an atmosphere about the early days of Methodism which was peculiarly its own; a rarity down among the every-day lives of simple, commonplace people which breathed of the mountain heights where John Wesley himself had kindled the inspiration and revival which were connected with his name. His friendship had been a living reality in many homes, and his disciples were fired by the power of his personality, as well as by the principles which he had let loose, to stir up the stagnant pools of so much of the religious life of that day. And as the personal touch in everything brings with it a certain quality of influence which is lacking from the force of abstract opinions, the men and ministers who owed their adherence to a living leader were of a somewhat different fibre from those who since have been loyal to his memory.

The Rev. Joseph Fowler was essentially one of the former type. His father had been one of Wesley's intimate friends, and, like him, a Churchman. The Vicar of Bradford, where he lived, and which was then a small unimposing town, was also a Methodist, and another of Wesley's friends, so that Joseph Fowler was brought up in the very heart of the new revival, and not only imbibed,

but handed on in his turn to his son the spirit of that unspoiled Churchmanship which found in Methodism an expansion rather than a substitute. The influence of Mr. Crosse, the vicar, was very great in the home of his parishioners, and all that influence was used on behalf of the new society of Methodism. He exchanged pulpits—to use a modern phrase—with Wesley and Fletcher, and required that his curates should be also Methodists. Small wonder was it, then, that Joseph Fowler should have been inspired by this new awakening of spiritual life, which spread through the whole town of Bradford like some consuming fire, and that he should have thrown in his lot with the new ministry, which promised to be so great a power for good throughout the whole country.

New methods always make a strong appeal to the young, and the earnest young men of that day caught up with enthusiasm the new revivalism; but Joseph Fowler ~~was~~ ^{did} cling to the traditions of the Church, and throughout his whole ministry was ever loyal to the liturgy, for which he had a deep reverence and love. The swing from conventionalism to experimentalism carried with it his inner spiritual life, but he still retained the outward forms which make up so much of the dignity of the old church service, and to the day of his death he conducted his own morning services in exactly the same liturgical form.

Joseph Fowler was a man of exceptional powers; a refined and polished scholar; a great interpreter of Scripture; a most able and interesting preacher, possessing a personality of great dignity, though of a somewhat stern and puritanical type. He was soon acknowledged as a head and shoulders above the vast majority of those who had been called to the new ministry, and he became one of the few leaders who carried on the revival started by John Wesley into a fixed and permanent power in the land. He was sent to fill the largest chapels, and to fortify the strongholds of the new faith; and his intense seriousness and grave dignity leavened the almost riotous unconventionality of this outspoken, experimental faith.

“I first saw Mr. Fowler,” wrote Dr. Benjamin Gregory, to whose early recollections of these far-away days I am greatly indebted for much of the portraiture of my grandfather, “in 1832,

when he brought his eldest son Robert to Woodhouse Grove School. I was much struck with his appearance as he stood and took a long, silent, broad, observant view of the hundred boys and five masters. His tall figure was perfectly erect. He seemed rather spare, but vigorous and wiry. His square, forensic brow, with massive eyebrows, somewhat overshadowed his keen, searching eyes. He impressed me as grave, strict to the very verge of sternness and austerity. And, in intimate acquaintance in the after-years, I found the impression to be true, although these qualities were wonderfully softened, sweetened, and subdued by other characteristics. No doubt the basis of his character was seriousness and an indomitable serviceability. On no man's countenance and habits did I ever see more deeply stamped the strong, effective motto: 'Life is real, life is earnest.' He evidently felt: 'We are placed in this world to do and dare.' His hypothesis of human nature was a working hypothesis. 'I must work' was his supreme conviction. I know he carried this conviction to an incurable excess, till work became to him an absolute necessity, and a holiday a weariness."

Such a description as this might with almost equal truth have been written half a century later of his younger son, Henry Hartley Fowler. And the latter owed much of his character and many of his powers to a father, who was less distinguished only because he had laid his talents on that altar of self-sacrifice, which claims all the worldly prospects and ambitions of any minister of religion.

Joseph Fowler was supremely interested in politics, and held the same Liberal opinions which he bequeathed to his son. Indeed, it was this Liberalism which prevented his becoming in after years President of the Conference, the majority of votes being on the Conservative side, though, had his life been spared, he would by the power of his personality have triumphed eventually over those prejudices and been awarded his proper place. The late Mr. W. T. Stead thus wrote of him: "The Rev. Joseph Fowler occupied a very distinguished position in the Connexion. In those days Wesleyan Methodism was a hot-bed of Toryism, and what appears even to the Conservative Wesleyan of to-day of a very extreme and prosperous type. When Henry Fowler

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was a boy, it was quite an established article of faith in many Methodist circles that there was something ungodly in political life. In the midst of such a Conservative and reactionary generation the Rev. Joseph Fowler shone forth as a pillar of light. He was a man of high education, broad views and unimpeachable orthodoxy; and such a general favourite that, after being Secretary to the Conference, he would, in spite of his Liberalism, most surely have been elected President, but for his unfortunate and premature death. It was from his father that Henry Fowler inherited that stalwart Liberalism that has always distinguished him ever since he first took part in political life."

"I can never forget the wickedness of Toryism," was a saying of Dr. Arnold's which my grandfather frequently quoted, and I have heard my father also quote it again and again.

As a business man and administrator there were few in his world who could compare with Joseph Fowler, and it is remarkable to note in the recollections of those who knew him countless characteristics with which those of the next generation were familiar in his son.

"His temperament was not sanguine."

"Mr. Fowler's seeming snappishness was, for the most part, a strong and kind man's playfulness."

"His mannerism was abruptness, though it resulted mainly, doubtless, from his constitutional quickness, alertness, wide-awakeness and promptitude. It must be confessed that he found verbosity, or expansive and obtrusive egotism, or wanton waste of time and words, most difficult to bear."

"He had an instinctive antipathy to everything which looked like uppishness or self-conceitedness in the young. On the other hand, he rejoiced over genuine excellence of any kind, 'as one that findeth great spoil.'"

My grandfather had a keen appreciation of a good sermon or great speech, and possessed the power of being able to listen, which is not too common a one among preachers and speakers. A characteristic again most marked in his son. In a letter of his which has been preserved and printed by Dr. Benjamin Gregory, from whose book, "Side Lights on the Conflicts of

Methodism," the above quotations have been taken, he wrote : " I quite agree with you that Methodism should have nothing to do with politics " ; and there was nothing my father detested more than a political sermon, or the introduction into the pulpit of any of the controversial subjects of the day. Nor had he any real sympathy with political Nonconformity, and often deplored the increasing tide thereof.

" I have heard politics all the week," he often used to say, " and on Sunday I want to hear something quite different. Besides, I know quite as much about politics as any preacher can tell me, if not a little more. What I want on Sunday is the Gospel and an exposition of the Scriptures." The feeling was also evidently an inherited one.

Mr. William Bunting, the grandfather of the late Sir Percy Bunting, editor of the *Contemporary Review*, wrote : " I had the happiness of a long intimacy with the Rev. Joseph Fowler, who was one of the most eminent, able and generally beloved Ministers of the British Wesleyan Connexion, and a prince of Christian pastors." And it was in the pastor, as well as in the preacher, that his great influence lay. He proved the power of pastoral visiting, and established a church life, which was founded upon the religion in the home. Once, when visiting a poor Yorkshire woman, whose husband was blind, my grandfather expressed the hope that she read the Bible regularly to him. She replied : " Aye, that I do, sir, and many's the bit that I put in for his good."

The home of such a man as Joseph Fowler was necessarily strongly coloured by his personality. The typical early Methodist home possessed a charm which it is difficult exactly to portray. The spirit of utter unworldliness was its atmosphere, so there was no room for the pretence which vulgarizes, and the anxiety which cramps, so much middle-class life. Such a home is described in *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*, and such were the principles in which young Methodists were trained. " They were early taught by their father that the only two things of importance in this life were salvation and education ; likewise, that the verb *To be* is of infinite moment, the verb *To do* of great weight, and the verb *To have*

of no significance at all. Therefore, whatever faults and failings they might suffer from in after-life, there was no possibility of the little Seaton's becoming vulgar." Those were homes of perfect simplicity and naturalness, and were felt to be just meeting-places for strangers and sojourners as all our fathers were. There was no need of inclination to beautify them up to the level of luxuries, for those stern Puritan householders looked ever to the "many mansions" where they felt their true homes to be. On the other hand, there were no squalid economies to tarnish refinement, for the Methodist minister has always been better treated as regards his home than the clergy of the endowed Church. The Wesleyan is, indeed, only a wayfarer in one circuit after another, but he is freed from the cruel cares of increasing dilapidations which lie so heavily upon the beneficed clergy. The prayer of Agur was often on the lips of those old-fashioned men, and is published in many of their printed family devotions: "Give me neither poverty nor riches"; and, as far as they were concerned, it was an answered prayer. They had enough—they did not want any more. They were themselves—they did not wish to pretend to be anyone else. They had a daily account to render to Him, from Whom no secrets are hid, and so they had no taste or temptation to be insincere. My father expressed a great appreciation of all the truths about Methodism in his daughter's novel, *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*: "The Methodists of the past generation lived always with their lamps lit and their loins girded, as those that wait for their Lord; and they sought so diligently for the True that they had no leisure to look for the Beautiful, for it had not yet been revealed to them that the True and the Beautiful are one. They were so fearful of confounding the substance with the shadow, that they did not altogether realize that the shadow is, after all, but the reflection of the substance, and, therefore, a revelation of the same; but they gazed so steadfastly into Heaven, that they were in danger of forgetting how God made the Earth as well as the Heavens, and saw that it was good. To their ears there was no message in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire; but they heard clearly the still, small Voice, and they did whatsoever it commanded

them. We need not pity them over-much that some of the beauty and poetry of life was hid from their eyes." They that seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness know no abiding lack ; for all these things shall be added unto them."

Therefore, such a home as Joseph Fowler's was free from any taint of what was common or unclear ; but far more than that, it was a home of which he was in reality the head. He set the tone far above an ordinary pitch in intellectualism as well as spirituality.

Reading was to him, as to his children after him, almost as great a necessity as eating. A certain sum of money was apportioned each year to the purchase of the best new books, without which mental culture would have been at a standstill. And the love of a library was handed on, even in an increased degree, to his son Henry. The modern idea, practised in so many deeds rather than preached in so many words, that it is enough in a household for the woman to be religious, and the children, when young, to be like her, was unknown in early Methodism. "Himself believed and his whole house" was rather their attitude ; and all the flow of life, whether of mind or soul, emanated from the scholarly and saintly man who was the father of Henry Fowler.

Into such a home as this my father was born on May 16th, 1830. His mother was Elizabeth Macneil Laing, step-daughter of Mr. Hartley, of Sunderland, and half-sister of James Hartley, M.P. for Sunderland, and John Hartley, an iron-master of South Staffordshire. She was of Scottish descent on one side, as her names imply, and, on the other, of Manx origin. Her mother was a Blackburn, descended from an Archbishop of York of that name, and I have often heard my father say, with a smile : "In spite of my Nonconformity, I am descended from an archbishop, though I am afraid he wasn't a very good one." He used also to say that though he himself was a regular Saxon, he thought a little Celtic blood had come through the Manx-woman to his children, and was intensely amused when one of them remarked : "I hardly like to say that my grandmother was a Manx-woman, because it sounds as if she hadn't a tail."

Elizabeth Fowler seems to have been a perfect helpmeet to her husband, supplying, in her cheerful disposition and sunshiny temperament, a counterpart to his sombre, stern and reserved character. She was blessed especially with the rare attribute of common-sense, and this her son inherited from her: contrary to proverbial tradition, it was his father whom he mainly resembled, though his mother gave him her singularly sweet and kindly smile. His devotion to his mother and care for her, during a long and dependent widowhood, are a true testing line for the depths of tenderness and family affection underlying an austerity and reserve, which in my father were often misunderstood.

In the year 1830 Joseph Fowler was in the Sunderland circuit, and his second son, Henry Hartley, was baptized at Bishop's Wearmouth on the 8th of November of the same year. My grandfather had two children by a former marriage: Robert, who, having been trained as a doctor, was called to the Wesleyan Ministry in Canada, and Mary, who married a Mr. Witty of Hull.

My father's earliest recollection was going to see Lord Macaulay chaired in Leeds after his return to Parliament in December, 1832; and though only two and a half years old at the time, he distinctly remembered all his life the orange ribbons, and the resolve that when he was a man the same thing should be done to him. He told his parents on returning home: "When I am a man I should like to be a real Macaulay." This early resolve might have been an unconscious prophecy of the far-away future, when, like Macaulay, he, too, defended a Government Bill for India in a speech of great power, and carried it triumphantly through the House of Commons.

When in Leeds, he made a point of attending all the funerals in the adjoining graveyard, with a little volume of Baxter's *Saints' Rest* tucked under his arm. It was in Leeds that Dr. Gregory refers to him as "the little master of the Brunswick preacher's house. He was a fluent, self-possessed little gentleman, of four years old, who fixed a scrutinizing, measure-taking gaze upon his interlocutor, following up an answer by a counter-question, altogether unembarrassed by the fear of man or boy. With him it was always 'question-time,' and his precocious



THE REV. JOSEPH FOWLER

(From an oil painting)

parleying gave promise of debating power which has not been unfulfilled." In very childish days, on coming in from his day-school, little Henry would shrewdly ask: "Is my father in?" If the answer was in the affirmative, the child was quite quiet; but if his father were out, and something had vexed him at school, he would sit on the bottom step of the staircase and cry his grief away. He knew that his father would not put up with a crying boy. Mr. Fowler's mother lived with them in those days, and once she showed her watch to her youthful grandson, and told him it should be his when she went to Heaven. A few days afterwards he considerably asked her if she wouldn't like to be going to Heaven soon.

The difference between the ways of parents in those and these days is shown by the story his mother told of how, when her little girl had scarlet fever, Henry was not forbidden to go in the bedroom; but he never would himself, for fear of infection, go further into her room than to the end of the chest of drawers, from which he could help himself to the grapes. This caution his father considered most cowardly, and laughed at him for it; but Henry, neither then nor at any other date in his life, was ever laughed out of his attribute of caution.

He was five years old when his father moved to Bristol, and there he attended a day school, walking to and fro by himself and assimilating a deep interest in the Bristol shipping trade and merchant princes, which seemed to him an embodied fairy-tale of adventure and wonder.

From Bristol the family moved to Newcastle-on-Tyne, and from there Henry was sent as a boarder to Woodhouse Grove, a school for the sons of Methodist ministers in Yorkshire.

The following letter was written home when he was ten years of age:

"MY DEAR MAMMA,

"It is with great pleasure that I write a slip-letter to you. I have had a letter from sister to say she will be at Leeds at Christmas. Please to send me a cake by the coach, other boys have them from a greater distance than Newcastle.

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The direction is—Master H. H. Fowler, Woodhouse Grove, Rawdon near Leeds. To be left at the 'Haunch of Venison,' Leeds, from where the carrier will bring it. If you can't do that, please write to me soon and send me some money and postage-stamps. Please to let me have more newspapers. I like the school middling, but I am glad I have only to stay two years, and then to go to Sheffield. Please to tell my father that it is customary for the parents at the vacation to write and say when we are to come home. I would not go home before the examination, but I can very well come home the last day for I shall be examined the first. So on the 2nd day, if you please, I can leave the Grove at two in the afternoon, get to Leeds before five; tea at Mr. Simpson's, and go by the 8.6 o'clock. Here sleep comfortably all night and be in Newcastle next morning. I should prefer this far better than the tedious journey on the Times or Telegraph. My friend is H. Grear, the son of the Headmaster; he is a nice and good boy. He is in the same class as I am. We both meet in the Rev. S. Allen's 2nd Class. I have had a letter from Emily, but not from Edwin or Hartley. If you have received this letter in your next put a mark at the beginning and send me what I desired. Remember at home always after dinner I want something, but I can never get anything here, so you will please to send me something. Please write by return of post. Give my love to all Newcastle and Sunderland friends, and

"Believe me to be

"Your affectionate son,

"HENRY HARTLEY FOWLER."

His letters from school show what he was very fond of pointing out to the next generation of boys—namely, that he had only one holiday in the year at midsummer, and returned to school for a whole year's term until the following June.

He travelled to and from school in the mail coach from Newcastle. The diet at school in those days was very poor—only three meals a day, two of which consisted entirely of bread and

milk and water. There was no cricket or football, or any organized game, only, to use his own characteristic language, "feeble, ineffective, miserable fives." The school hours began at six a.m., and again to quote from him, "in the deepest, darkest, bitterest winter," they began work at seven a.m. There were no half-holidays, and only a trifling relaxation on Saturday afternoons.

When he was eleven years old he wrote the following :

" W. H. Grove, Dec. 8th, 1841.

" MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

" I received your short note on Monday. It is not the general rule to write on the first of the month ; but we should have written sooner had it not been the examination. I did but middling with Mr. Galland. Mr. West said I was wonderfully improved in my Catechism, and as for Mr. Swale, I got a good mark for every sum. So you will see upon the whole I did tolerably. I have proceeded from Sallust and Greek Testament to the XII Orations of Cicero, and the Anabasis of Xenophon. Perhaps you are not aware that after I received your letter saying you thought I was inadequate to speak I instantly gave it up, thinking you more proper to judge for me. As Christmas is now approaching I shall be looking out for a parcel (larger than usual because of Christmas). If you could, I should like you to enclose in my parcel Butler's Atlas and Johnson's Dictionary ; besides the cake and other sweetmeats, I should like a stick or two of Spanish. I see from my Minutes to my great joy that you are in the Bradford Deputation. I hope you will come, as Mr. Morley would allow me to come to Bradford to see you if you wrote for me. If you remember in the vacation you promised 1/- to the boy who studied out of school hours. Master Woolsey (first boy in the school) is always studying out of school, so I think he is entitled to the 1/-. Tell Mary Miss Morley is engaged to Mr. Smetham. On the 5th Nov. we had a piece of parkin and a large bonfire. On Mrs. Morley's birthday we were treated with goose for dinner and for

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supper buns and TEA. I wish Grandmamma would write. I have a favour to ask you :—many boys' fathers have granted them it. Will you promise if I get first boy in the school and get invited to stay an extra year to give me when I leave £1 and a new watch ? It would stimulate me greatly. I think now I feel a greater delight in my studies than ever, for before I used to think them a burden, but now I see of what use they will be to me and I delight in them. Together with Woolsey's shilling in your next I should like a new plan, my old one being worn out, also my stock of postage-stamps is exhausted. Wishing you a happy, happy Christmas and a merry New Year, I must now conclude by requesting you to give my love to my sisters and all my Newcastle and Sunderland friends, and accept the same from

"Your ever affec. Son,

"HENRY HARTLEY FOWLER.

"P.S.—Write as soon as possible."

On the same sheet of paper crossed is written the following elder-brotherly letter to his little sister, five years his junior :

"DEAR LOUEY,

"As I have some spare time I thought it would please you greatly to hear from me. Can you write yet ? Oh, how pleased should I be to receive a letter from you ! I am sure it is quite time, next month you will be seven years old, and I was only seven when I left Mr. Howlett's, and when we got to Hull, I used to write very often to my Grandmamma, so you see it is time for you to write letters. When did you go to Sunderland last, are you going to Aunt Kirk's this Christmas ? Now be a good girl and ever remember your dear, dear Brother,

"HENRY."

This letter was sealed with a little paper wafer, inscribed with the singularly inappropriate text, "Woe unto them who drink wine in bowls." The only other schoolboy letter is an undated

scrap addressed to his father just before he left Newcastle, Henry being then about twelve years old :

" I expect to leave the Grove next vacation having fulfilled my promised time two years. Who have they invited to Newcastle ? And now as to our Missionary Meeting, there are thirteen of us boys going to be speakers. We have not yet fixed upon our chairman, but we are thinking of Mr. Galland or T. Smith, Esq., of Morley House. Please write directly and send me some newspapers. If I had to send you two or three lines about our Missionary Meeting could you get them put under the head of ' Clerical and Religious News ' in the *Courant* ?

" Believe me to be

" Your affec. Son,

" HENRY HARTLEY FOWLER."

It had been arranged that from Newcastle Joseph Fowler should go to Birmingham, and he was hoping from there to send his son Henry to King Edward's School, where he would have been a schoolfellow of Dr. Lightfoot—Bishop of Durham, and Dr. Benson—Archbishop of Canterbury ; but the Conference changed the appointment at the last moment and sent him to Great Queen Street, London, instead. I have often heard my father deplore this change, which so altered his educational career, as his ambition was to win one of the scholarships from King Edward's School to Oxford, and, after that, to go to the Bar. All through his life a haze of regret hung over those disappointed hopes. The " might-have-been " loomed so alluring in his imagination that he never quite got over its loss. He always longed to have been at Oxford, and felt keenly the drawback that the school of St. Saviour's, Southwark, to which he was then sent in London, had no available scholarships to the Universities, and his father could not afford to send him without one.

On his way to and from this school he used to pass a shop where judges' robes were displayed in the window. He often stopped to gaze at them, and even then looked forward to being

a judge himself, after a distinguished career at the Bar. For the Bar was his ambition and his goal. He was brought up to the idea of it, trained in the desire for it, and inspired by the anticipation of it. The fact of his father's early death, just as his son reached manhood, made it impossible for this ambition to be fulfilled.

The Headmaster of St. Saviour's was the Rev. Lambert Sharpe; and two of his schoolfellows there were William Atherton, afterwards Sir William Atherton, Attorney-General, and Dr. Walker, the late High Master of St. Paul's School.

A small diary of his, begun in October, 1842, on his arrival in London, contains very few entries except the names of the preachers he heard each Sunday, and one momentous announcement on February 20th: "House of Commons went to, late, had holiday"; and also an entry of some election, when "Pattison got in by 165 majority."

When a day boy at St. Saviour's, he was allowed fourpence a day for his lunch, and his expenditure of the same was most characteristic of his future development: he spent twopence on his meal, a penny to read the *Times*, and a penny he gave as a tip to the waiter. He was always excessively generous in the matter of tipping, and used to uphold the custom of giving, especially to railway servants, of whose obligingness and civility he was naturally able to speak in the highest terms.

The Fowlers' life in that London circuit was marked by the making of many interesting friends and the enjoyment of much congenial society. Dr. Rigg thus describes how, when a candidate for the Wesleyan Ministry, he visited my grandfather's home in 1845:

"It was a full house and exceedingly lively. The room into which I was introduced on that Saturday evening was well filled by a vivacious family, while Mrs. Fowler went in and out as domestic calls prompted. Mr. Fowler was not present for some time after my entrance. The conversation, meantime, was more than brisk; its liveliness was marked. The chief speaker was the present Sir Henry Fowler, but all bore a ready and willing part in it except we two visitors, who listened and admired, occasionally answering a question if directly spoken to. Argument

abounded and epigram was not wanting. It was not merely at the St. Saviour's School that Henry Fowler gained his education for life's practice. After the entrance of the head of the family the character of the conversational stimulus to the mind was very soon raised to a higher pitch. Mr. Fowler immediately and sharply took part in the conversation. He began by way of question. The tone of his questioning sounded peremptory—it was very sharp: his replies in return to the answers elicited were exceedingly incisive. It was not long before he shot an interrogation across at myself. It sounded as if he might have been angry with me, though I could not imagine how that could be. However, not being conscious of anything to give offence, I gave a distinct answer. The reply to this was a second question, still very sharp, followed by another reply rather fuller and more distinct. So we went on for a little while. Meantime his questions began to be put in a gentler and still a gentler tone. He began to make instructive remarks and to smile and look pleasant. He spoke more or less in agreement with what he had elicited in a manner so caustic, as it seemed to me. It now began to be clear that his initial onset was, in fact, mere mannerism, and absolutely free from any irritation or animus. It was a way he had of banishing idle commonplace and initiating a lively conversation, especially if strangers were present to be instructed. It affected his tone and manner in the initiation of a discussion in which he was interested. He used it unconsciously in dealing with his friends and his family.

“On the Sunday I saw and heard little of Mr. Fowler. He had his necessary Sunday appointments, and for his visitors it was a quiet Sunday of preaching or joining in worship, and of Christian conversation. But on Monday morning he took us candidates as his own special charge on the way to City Road morning chapel for the examination; and having little questioning to do, he conversed in the way of explanation, suggestion and kindly counsel in the pleasantest and also the frankest and most confidential manner. He treated us wholly as friends without a touch of conscious superiority, except as to experience and knowledge in certain directions. A more sympathetic and congenial

elderly companion, a more friendly and unassuming counsellor for candidates hoping to become Christian ministers, we could not have had.

"As a preacher, Mr. Fowler's sermons were distinguished by strong sense, clear evangelical teaching, and spiritual influence and unction. He was famous as a superintendent, wise and reasonable, firm, but not overbearing.

"It may be believed that Mr. Fowler's son Henry owed something of his remarkable argumentative readiness and force as a speaker in his Parliamentary career to the sharp practice in discussion, to the lively interchange of question and answer, which was practised familiarly in the home-circle with the sanction of the parental influence and example. No doubt, also, the son felt in the moulding of his own character the influence of that equitable and considerate Liberalism, neither timid, nor factious, nor personally ungenerous, which was the basis of his father's public life. Possibly, also, his gifted daughter, the well-known epigrammatic novelist—Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler—may have owed something through heredity to such lively causeries as those of which I was witness in Harper Street, between her father and his father, particularly in respect of the almost incessant flash of epigram and sword-play so characteristic of her stories."

Those who knew my father best will recognize in the above description his own sharp, decisive manner to strangers, which was wont to melt away into a kindliness of interest which at first it so entirely concealed.

My father used to tell how he and the Right Hon. W. H. Smith attended Great Queen Street Chapel together, and how the latter sat with his mother in the front of the gallery. The congregation little thought then that those boys were marked for such interesting, distinguished careers on different benches of the House of Commons in days to come, and that they would occupy such high positions in the two conflicting Governments.

The life of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith brings out the same simplicity of character, the same unself-seeking statesmanship, the same integrity of principles and loyalty to the right, which were also to be found in the life of my father; and it makes one wonder

whether perhaps the old-fashioned teaching, the strictly-kept Sundays, and the simple religion of their youth helped to lay the foundation of those noble characteristics.

Another young friend of those days was Dr. C. Radcliffe, the eminent physician and co-labourer with Huxley, and Dr. Green, the artist. The Rev. Dr. Abbott, Head Master of the City of London School, also worshipped then at Great Queen Street Chapel.

There was in those days a great intimacy between the Inces and the Fowlers, the former being the parents of Dr. Ince, the distinguished Canon of Christchurch and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. In a letter written by Canon Ince to my father, in 1895, he says :

“ I recall the time near fifty years ago when in your boyhood you were a visitor at the house of my father and mother in Southampton Street, Strand, who were very intimate friends of your father, the Rev. Joseph Fowler, at that time Superintendent Wesleyan Minister of Great Queen Street Circuit. I have still a distinct remembrance of an occasion when you went home early from our house to hear what were the modifications introduced into the Bill for the Education of Factory Children by Sir James Graham, there having arisen a very great outcry against the Bill as unfair to us Dissenters. Thus, on reference to the *Annual Register*, I find, must have been in May, 1843, a few months before I came up to Oxford. This was always looked upon in our family as a prophecy of the interest you would take in politics.”

Henry Fowler was at that day just thirteen years old, and the interest he then felt in politics never seems to have diminished, but to have spread and increased with maturing years. The sayings and shibboleths of his early home-life hung about him to the end, and his great devotion to the Methodist Church sprang from the roots of home, and was ever hallowed by those early memories.

“ Be just before you are generous ” was one oft-quoted sentence of his father's. His love of London was an inherited one ; also his interest in law. Dr. Gregory writes of Joseph Fowler : “ If

he felt jaded or run down or worried, he would say to me : ' Let's go to Lincoln's Inn to hear the pleadings in such-and-such a case before Lord Lyndhurst, and what he has to say about them ; or to Westminster Hall. There's sure to be some interesting case on.' And he enjoyed, as a vast treat, a visit to the House of Commons and to listen to its debates. The great passion for, and pleasure in work, common to both Joseph Fowler and his son, grew luxuriantly in the atmosphere of their home. That life was meant for enjoyment, or profit, or anything but work, never seems to have entered either of their heads. No soldier was ever drilled into smartness more perfectly than Henry Fowler was drilled from his earliest boyhood into the service of work.

" I never met with the Rev. Joseph Fowler's match for the neat and quick despatch of business—the getting so much clean and thorough work accomplished in so short a time. I never knew a late meeting when he was in the chair. Mr. Fowler was very intolerant of late hours in meetings or services. When in Hull, his official residence as superintendent minister joined hard to the synagogue, and if, on his return on a Sunday evening from preaching at another chapel, he found a colleague holding a prayer-meeting and prolonging it unduly, he would slip quietly in by the communicating door near the pulpit, and at the first pause his voice would be heard pronouncing the Benediction.

" In Mr. Fowler's distinguished younger son," continued Dr. Gregory, " his father's strong, fine qualities distinctly reappear. Their mental structure and their moral habitude were not at all dissimilar. He was a great fighter, as his son proved himself to be in later years, and was commonly called the ' statesman of the Connexion.' "

Their minds were both cast in a legal mould, and they were both quick to see and weigh correctly all the points of any situation. They were both cautious in the consideration of any standpoint, and not only fulfilled the old injunction to " look before you leap," but they looked much further afield, and reckoned the contingencies of the future with an almost overstrained foresight. Though caution is good in itself, I think my father carried it to an almost crippling extreme, and often shrank from a venture when

it would have been wiser to have taken it. Another marked characteristic which Dr. Gregory, in viewing from his own personal knowledge the Methodist Minister and the Minister of State, also points out is their instinct for compromise, their power of giving up the less to win the large. There was nothing of the fanatic about either of them. "All or nothing" was never a shibboleth in their mouths. They both preached and practised the common-sense doctrine, that half a loaf is better than no bread ; and were content to try to cut the half as large as possible. This quality was perhaps the more remarkable in Joseph Fowler than in his son ; for the former, we must remember, was one of the pioneers of a new form of the faith, and was, therefore, more prone to fanaticism. The statesman soon learns, if he does not know it by instinct, that compromise is the condition of all progress, and that eagerness to gain must be tempered by readiness to concede ; for there is no world more than that of politics in which the old adage proves true that "to grasp all is to lose all."

CHAPTER II

1852—1857

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

"The marriage of true minds."—SHAKESPEARE.

"The happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give."—RUSKIN.

WHEN Henry Fowler, as a boy, used to stay in Wolverhampton with his uncle, John Hartley, who had married Emma, second daughter of George Benjamin Thorneycroft, a great South Staffordshire ironmaster, he met there her younger sister Ellen; and at that early age he made up his mind that he would one day be Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton and would marry Ellen Thorneycroft. From those ambitions nothing ever moved him, and with the patient perseverance which rarely fails to achieve success, he set out towards the accomplishment of those purposes, and was content to wait till he was nearly thirty years of age before he fulfilled the one, and until he was fifty years old before he represented the borough of Wolverhampton. Perhaps one of the secrets of his success was that he always knew his own mind, and nothing could change his designs. Many people would get what they want in life if they only wanted it long enough; and Henry Fowler not only stuck to what he wanted throughout his whole career, but he practically never wanted anything else; therefore, the power of concentration was added to that of persistence.

In 1851, not long before the Rev. Joseph Fowler's death, a letter was received, either by him or his wife, from this same Ellen Thorneycroft, about certain plans that were being made for her

family to come to London to visit the great Exhibition ; and after reading the letter, he turned to his son and said : " That is the sort of girl I should like you to marry." It may be a doubtful question as to whether the letters we write or the letters we receive are the more indicative of our characters ; but it is certain that in the last century there was much more personality in correspondence than there is to-day, when telegrams and telephones reduce most communications to twelve words or three minutes. And in this girl's letter there must have been some strong colour of personality for such a man as Joseph Fowler to have judged her, and so truly, thereby. He had met her before, but the letter seems to have stamped the impression she had made upon him into a tangible wish that his son should be fortunate enough to win the love of such a woman. The wish may have been but casually expressed, but it was unconsciously weighted with a prophecy which time and happy experience fulfilled ; and nothing which he could have wished his son would have been so truly for his welfare and happiness as that perfect union of heart and life which was subsequently found in this marriage.

The course of Henry Fowler's love-affair, however, did not by any means run smooth. Indeed, throughout his whole life nothing came to him easily. A great many good things did come, but each was waited and worked for to the uttermost farthing of its price and value. He was a successful but not a lucky man, and wages rather than winnings were the attainments of his life.

The woman on whom he had set his love had been brought up in a very different type of home and surroundings from his own. Her father, long before his children were grown up, had amassed a large fortune ; and on his death, in the same year as Joseph Fowler's, he left enough, as it was counted in those days, to make all his children rich. Ellen, the only unmarried one, was much sought after for worldly as well as personal considerations, and was expected by her family to make a good match. She had always breathed the atmosphere of wealth, and it never struck her that she could not have whatever she wanted that was purchasable. It was then the days of proposals, and many were the

suitors who tried their luck and brought her the prospects of increased wealth and other worldly advantages.

Imagine, then, the consternation of her large family circle when Ellen showed her preference for the poor son of a Wesleyan minister, who had no possessions but his brains, and no heritage but his culture and character. And the strange thing was that the girl was full of ambition—and yet she chose this man—not thereby choking her ambition, but judging by a wiser insight and a prouder gauge the lengths to which his powers might lead her—far, far beyond the mere amassing of money, or the first rank of the social amphitheatre of a provincial town. A girl friend of hers at that time—the sister of the late Mr. Frank James, sometime M.P. for Walsall—seems also to have been gifted with prophetic insight, for her remark after meeting Henry Fowler was never forgotten by my mother: “Ellen, that man will go far, and he will take you with him.” It is strange that the same words, “that man will go far,” were spoken of Henry Fowler between twenty and thirty years later on the threshold of his Parliamentary career. Nevertheless, the time of his wooing was difficult, and darkened by many misunderstandings caused by the perpetual pressure that was brought to bear on her by her own people to loosen the tie between the two lovers. And though she was not really influenced in any vital respect, yet the atmosphere of misrepresentation, a subtler danger than that of opposition, could not but breed those trifling torments which render an engagement time so much more trying to the man than to the woman, and especially to a man in such a position as Henry Fowler was in his courting days. His temperament, it must be remembered, was sombre and proudly reserved. No spirit of light-heartedness ever broke through the dead earnestness of all his purposes, no cheerful optimism ever brightened a natural outlook of gloom. Moreover, he was profoundly ignorant then, as, indeed, he was fifty years later, of a woman’s ways. His wife, as a wife, he perfectly understood, and appreciated, and adored; but his wife as a woman he could never have fully comprehended, for there was no feminine light within him, as there is in many men, to show up the intricacies and inconsistencies of a woman’s nature, beyond the

boundaries of even her actions and speech. His love-letters show how utterly lost he was in the perplexities of her caprice, and how gravely and almost grimly he dealt with situations that really needed a far lighter hand. But in the young man, as in the old, his touch was never light. It was strong, and firm, and sure, and heavy. A splendid hand for a woman to clasp and cling to, and be guided by through life's long journey; and no couple ever walked more perfectly hand in hand than did my father and mother during all their married experience; but he was incapable of flirting for one moment even with the woman he loved, and was utterly unconscious of the flirting instinct which lurks in the woman's side of every love-affair.

She was also in a trying position, between the perpetual pull of family and friends, on the one hand, and a secret understanding with a proud and somewhat difficult lover, on the other. The inevitable misunderstandings were rife which are bound to arise when two natures begin to try to fit into each other, and especially when it happens, as it so often does, that a woman's home-life and her heart-life are entirely out of tune. The obstacles and difficulties chafe her, and she is apt to vent her petulance on the one person who will feel it, and to punish him for a fault of which he is absolutely innocent. The few years which stretched between this couple's love and their open engagement tell their own story in the following letter :

“ MY DEAR ELLEN,

“ I must write you one more letter, not by way of attempting either to involve you in a correspondence, or to induce you to alter your decision as to a meeting—on the contrary, I do not wish you to take any notice of this letter except in the single instance I will mention directly—but I cannot rest until I have said what, if I were as proud as I am afraid you think I am, I should be very unwilling to say, and what I would say is this : The other day I made a great many unfair and very unkind remarks to you, and I should have little reason to complain if from what I then said you had argued that I thought both unjustly and unkindly of you.

I do not, never did, think so. I have been, and still am, very sorry for my apparent unkindness, and I ask you to forgive me for it. This is not a mere form; I feel what I say, and I shall continue to be harassed and angry with myself until I know that you have forgiven me. And as I do not wish you to be exposed to any annoyance by even an indirect communication with me, I shall be quite satisfied if you will, when we next meet, tell me that you have forgiven me by simply using the word 'yes.' I have thought over a great deal of what you said and what you implied. I do appreciate and I am grateful for the line of conduct you are pursuing. And now I want you to banish from your mind any thought that I am murmuring at the decision to which you have come. It does pain me to think that I am the cause of unhappiness to you (and you said, and it has sunk deeply into my mind, that you 'had been unhappy for the last six months about' me); with all my pride I would far sooner submit to anything than think I am in any way the source of anxiety or vexation to you. I know all this looks very inconsistent, and so it is, and I can't help it. It is because I love you that I wish above all things to be thrown into your company; to see you; to talk with you; to strike the chords to which your heart responds; to tell you what I am thinking and what I am reading, to know what you are thinking and what you are reading; to develop an identity of feeling, not only in every-day subjects, but in every-day thought, and in that which is higher and better than all; it is because I regard you as I do, that I desire all this. And unless I strangely deceive myself, it is an evidence (no, not an evidence, a result) of that affection, and not the manifestation of a little pride, to feel and express the greatest unwillingness to be excluded from what I prize so highly. But when you say—and you have a perfect right to say it—'you love me and you must submit,' when you accompany that with the assurance of a reciprocated affection and an unconditional promise for the future, I feel that I should be a selfish fellow if I hesitated to submit. I again repeat what

I have already said in effect, and I say it with the most perfect sincerity, that I will do or suffer anything which will either add to your happiness or exempt you from any annoyance. And now, my dear Ellen, believe me, take me at my word, and do not allow yourself for one moment to suppose that at the bottom of my heart I consider you have in any way treated me otherwise than with a kindness and a consideration far beyond my merit. And, therefore, never think or use one word which you used in your last letter—'obligation.' I confer an obligation on you! There is no such thing as an obligation in affection. I am only doing my duty, and though I confess I have hitherto done it in a shabby, selfish way—though I have written and acted most inconsistently—though I have professed a readiness to please you, and then evinced a very unworthy reluctance to carry out my professions, I can only say my affection for you has been the cause of my inconsistency, and that I will try my best to discipline that affection into a kinder and more considerate course of conduct for the future. I have been greatly annoyed, both for your sake and my own, that our interview in Birmingham should have oozed out; but it has occurred to me that after all it may still be a secret, and that you are mistaken. I mean by this that the remark which was made to you might have referred to our meeting in Birmingham three years ago, when I accompanied you and Miss P——. If J. H. knew anything of our meeting there in January, I think he would have said something to me about it, and he has never made the slightest allusion to it. Some day, when you have an opportunity, tell me what you think, for if we really were observed, I should very much like to ferret out by whom. I want you to remove if you can from Miss P——'s mind the impression that I ever said anything regarding her to any third party which I would not have said in her presence. Between ourselves, I will frankly confess that up to a recent period I always regarded Miss P—— (not because she was your friend, but independently of that altogether) as A. 1; but when she was represented to me by those who had known her longer and

more intimately than myself, in a very unfavourable light (and those are the mildest terms I can use), and when I was led to conclude that she was the barrier between you and myself, why, of course, I felt it; but though I did feel it, I never forgot that she was your friend, and it would be a strange contradiction of my ideas of what is due to you if I deliberately and intentionally spoke disrespectfully of your friend. Don't let Miss P—— suppose that I ever took the trouble to ask you to set me right with her (for I am a wee bit proud, you know, on this point), but if you can set me right, pray do so; if you can't, I must live that piece of injustice down. Why certain parties should have appeared to attempt to create distrust between you and me is a mystery. I cannot and do not believe it to be an intentional attempt. The result, however, as far as I am concerned, has been (not without a struggle, for it would be an affectation to deny that it has been a very severe one) that I feel a more implicit confidence, a stronger belief, in you than ever I felt before; and in entrusting to you, as I am doing, my all, I do so with the most perfect, undoubted assurance that I am 'safe with you!' I don't think you will be sorry to hear that I am not indebted, directly or indirectly, to the influence regarding which you are so susceptible for my first three clients. And now, my own dear Ellen, good-bye. I would repeat again and again, if it would answer any purpose, my sincerest desire that you would not allow my selfishness (that is hardly the word—say, my thoughtless affection) to distress you. I have a 'motive,' and an all-powerful one, to do my utmost to succeed, and when I think myself worthy in some degree of you, I will, and not till then, ask for the game of chess. I never forget where you have promised to remember me, and united there, I cannot but anticipate in due time—at the proper time—a happy issue.

"I am, my dear Ellen,

"Yours very affectionately,

"H. H. FOWLER."

The following letter, dated March 17th, 1856, was written immediately on his engagement becoming a fact :

“ MY DEAREST ELLEN,

“ The heart-sickness of hope deferred is only surpassed, but it is gloriously surpassed, by the heart-joyfulness of hope fulfilled. I can't tell what I felt when I read your letter. I can only ask you to acknowledge with me the Hand Which has hitherto, as I confidently believe, directed all the steps of our intercourse, and has now brought us to the present happy, happy state. I am at a loss to express my feelings towards your mother—conscious as I am of my own unworthiness, I do appreciate, and very sensitively, too, her confidence and her kindness, and my resolution, not boastfully nor thoughtlessly made, is that nothing shall ever be wanting on my part to deserve that confidence and to repay that kindness. I attach more importance to her sanction than perhaps I have seemed to do ; and had it been withheld, the happiness of possessing your affection would have been dimmed by a disheartening cloud. I will try and be what I can't express. I don't regret the past—I mean its, for the time, depressing circumstances. The last few months have not only expanded and deepened my affection for you, but they have so elevated you in my esteem in the highest sense of the word, so beautifully disclosed points and phases of character which touch that deepest-seated of all mental chords, a man's respect, that the retrospect of what seemed a toilsome journey is among the dearest treasures of my heart. D.V., I start for the North to-morrow forenoon. I expect to be engaged in Sunderland on Wednesday ; but if my business is done (as I fully expect it will be), and trains will bring me, I will be with you to tea on Thursday afternoon, or as soon after as I can, if I am disappointed, you will know it results from absolute necessity. I hope to see my mother, and would prefer telling her personally ; you may rely both upon her and my sister's sympathy in attending to my wishes for keeping the matter quiet. And now ' life is

earnest ' must be a reality to me. I look to you for the tone, the nerve which you can, and which you will impart. Don't think I expect a cloudless day—no, but with you I will try and live through the day, whatever the unerring Wisdom of Him Who rules it may will that it shall be—grateful if it be sunny, and trusting and assured, if it be otherwise, that there is a bright light in the cloud.

“ I am, my own dear Ellen,

“ Your ever affectionate,

“ HENRY.”

It is evident that this great inrush of joy in their engagement was not left long undisturbed. The smouldering opposition of her family, instead of being wisely allowed to become stifled by the fact of her decision, broke forth into flame which scorched a good deal of happiness, even though it failed really to consume it. Only two months later, on May 6th, 1856, the year before his marriage, he wrote to her the following letter :

“ MY DEAREST ELLEN,

“ On the principle of doing to you as I would be done by, I occupy a few minutes in my old room at Lincoln's Inn while waiting for my friend Smith to go up with me to the Royal Academy, in writing to you just to say I am here and better. I hope to hear you are coming to-morrow. I am very anxious to have a chat with you, not only because I look for the ' comfort ' which you desire me to ' anticipate,' but because I shall get rid of part of my troubles by telling you of their cause. I mean not only the business vexation and family vexation with which you are acquainted, but the uneasy (that is the only word which I can think of, and it rather means too much) feeling with regard to you, which the knowledge of the misrepresentations made to you, accompanied by your apparent (I only say apparent) indisposition at times to spend any time in my company, has occasioned. Now don't be vexed with me. I admit I am unreasonable,

but you must make allowance ; and all these little things, though they may, when looked at separately, appear less than trivial, yet when united in one aggregate, and viewed in the light of a painful depression of spirits, have a very oppressive result. I have no trouble, I am thankful to say, which I cannot regard as abbreviated, if not dissipated, by your companionship. Now when you reprove me, as you ought to do, for the disease, always remember the remedy is with you. I must, and will, turn over a new leaf ; next week is one of these anniversaries when one always does. This year the associations and motives and anticipations of that occasion will be of a higher and more influential character than ever before known.

" I must stop. I am going to dine with Mr. Kirk at seven. I breakfast to-morrow with Mr. and Mrs. Hartley, who are in town. I heard the ' Wolverhampton Ironmasters ' taken off by G. Albert Smith last night. Thanks for your very, very kind note of Sunday, and with my best love,

Believe me, my dearest Ellen,

" Your ever affectionate,

" HENRY."

There is a true touch of human nature in his evident appreciation of the taking-off of the Wolverhampton ironmasters, and a still truer touch of grace in the fact that he makes no further comments to the daughter of one of them.

The quick perception of a joke is always counted to a man for righteousness ; but there is sometimes a subtler and more refined form of righteousness in the non-perception of a joke—or at any rate in the non-betrayal of such perception. To assume stupidity when we have it not is in certain circumstances the quintessence of fine art, and incidentally of Christian charity.

When a man lays down, as Henry Fowler did in his previous letter, the axiom that now that he is engaged, " life is real, life is earnest," and all which he preached from that text, he will find that, on the contrary, the woman is just alive to the fact that life is unreal and far from earnest, and that she has entered

perhaps the most irresponsible stage of her whole life. She often displays an unreasonableness and caprice which are quite foreign to her nature. She has, as it were, her last fling before putting on the blessed yoke of wifehood ; and it is her delight to tease and torment the lover whom, as a husband, it will be her life's mission to shield from every irritation. But of such lovers' lore Henry Fowler was profoundly ignorant ; and in some of his letters it is shown how deep was the dependency into which quite understandable conditions and caprice on the part of a high-spirited girl drove a nature such as his.

“ MY DEAREST ELLEN,

“I have been arguing with myself how I ought to deal with the painful feelings which have recently grieved me, and which since Saturday have distressed me. The assurance of your affection, and the confident belief that you will, as you have said you can, sympathize with every feeling of my heart, have strongly urged me to say what my own common-sense has said I must say if my love for you is genuine. If there is one fact of which I am satisfied more than another it is that you would not grieve me ; conscious of that, I ought, when I feel grieved, at once to tell you. I cannot conceive that you regard our engagement in any other light than as a living reality, the happiness of which is equalled, and intensified, too, by its solemnity. It is not an amusing episode uninfluencing and uninfluenced by the stern realities of life. You and I are meant to be, we ought to be, happier, wiser, better, holier, for our betrothal ; if we misapprehend or neglect the precious, never-to-be-repeated opportunities of that relationship, we shall commit a sad mistake. How are these opportunities to be secured ? how are their results to be attained ? Not by intention, or instinct ; in this, as in the highest results, means must be employed. The perfect development and, consequently, the gradual assimilation of mutual character, the unrestricted confidence, and, therefore, the uninterrupted communion of each other's spirits, the mutual nerving to the grand objects of life ; the reciprocal

support and sympathy in the Christian life ; the oneness of feeling, principle and action which love both creates and hallows—these are the results which are partially and may be fully ours. The first buddings are bright and full of promise ; it rests with you whether they shall be nipped by adverse influences, or whether they shall ripen into natural and lovely beauty. Do you, can you, seriously think that an engagement will be perfected in any one of these aspects by the footing on which you have placed or rather restrained our intercourse ? I have strangely misunderstood the nature of the most ordinary friendship if it could be treated successfully under such a homœopathic régime. Why can't we enjoy each other's society in the domestic circle ? We can ; I do. But will each other's society in the presence of others answer for the deep, the true intimacy of soul which ought to subsist between us ? Conceive of a correspondence carried on in the presence of others !!! If we are to live (in all the fulness of that glorious word) together—if that life is to be a reality of duty and not a hollow, conventional sham, the together must commence now. I am not unmindful of the intimation you have frequently made that the just requirements of others necessarily and properly interfere with what the dictates of your own heart would accord to me. You are perfectly right in this self-denial ; but while you decide that the claims of others shall not be sacrificed to our engagement, you are bound, also, to decide that our engagement shall not be sacrificed to those claims. I don't wish to be selfish, but when you have given me your heart, it is not selfish to wish to possess and enjoy it. Not to do so would be selfishness indeed. I will not amplify—you see the channel of my thoughts. Do not for one moment suppose that I am doubting your affection for me. Writing this letter is one of the most tangible proofs I could give you of my unimpaired reliance and of my continued and increasing love for you. The regulation of our intercourse rests with you, but for my sake, for your own sake, for our sake, do not allow any specious conventionalism to deprive that intercourse of its

real value, or to direct it from its true and noble purpose.
Exclude that serpent from our Eden.

“ I am, my dearest love,

“ Your most affectionate,

“ HENRY.”

One can imagine the different effects which such a letter as this would have upon his lady-love. Even allowing for the more solid dimensions in the Victorian era of all the departments of life, there is here an almost legal phraseology, and far too forcible stating of facts, which might easily have quenched the lighter spirit in which a girl instinctively regards her lover, and choked her varying moods with a pressure that was only suited for the graver impress of character. But whether she shied or not at the time, the fact remains that this letter has been kept by her tied up in a faded little bundle for over half a century.

On the 16th of July, 1856, Mrs. Joseph Fowler wrote to her prospective daughter-in-law in acknowledgment of the engagement :

“ MY VERY DEAR MISS ELLEN,

“ With much pleasure I received your kind letter, and must acknowledge something of condemnation in not having ere this given expression in words to the heartfelt satisfaction I experience in my son's able choice. Towards yourself, my dear Miss Ellen, I feel the most sincere and affectionate esteem, and look forward with pleasing anticipation to the period when I shall be entitled to number you as one of my own family circle. My convictions on those important points are that when a union is based on sincere affection, and on sound religious principles, we have every reason to expect the Almighty's Blessing and a sure amount of the happiness of this chequered scene. Will you excuse me in saying in reference to my Henry that he has ever been to his late dear and honoured father and myself a most affectionate and sympathizing son. I therefore conclude on such grounds we may reasonably expect that such a son

will prove a loving and tender husband,* and most sincerely do I believe that such will be your experience.

“ Believe me, my dear Miss Ellen,

“ Yours very affectionately,

“ E. FOWLER.”

The tie between these two was never loosened by that spirit of jealousy which many of even the best mothers are unable to banish from their heart of hearts, when they find that old prophecy fulfilled in their best-beloved son—that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. Whether her nature was too sweet and sunshiny to be clouded by anything so ugly as jealousy, or whether Elizabeth Fowler had, by the grace of God, so purified her character from such blemishes, she achieved the rare result of never once allowing the breath of the “ in-law ” to dim the bright surface of her intercourse with her son’s wife.

On the 16th of May, 1856, his twenty-sixth birthday, and the first one after their engagement, my father wrote as follows :

“ MY DEAREST ELLEN,

“ With untold and untellable pleasure I welcomed your congratulations this morning. The ‘ wishes ’ and the heart from which these wishes sprung I value most, and your beautiful birthday gift will derive its greatest and abiding worth as recalling those wishes and that heart. I do indeed re-echo your prayer that we may together enjoy many happy returns of to-day, and that this and every other starting-point in the journey of our lives may disclose a brighter landscape behind—a more brilliant and alluring prospect in advance. My feeling to-day is intense dissatisfaction with myself—unspeakable gratitude to Him Who has brought me hitherto. Every thought suggests matter for grateful joy, while the facts, alas ! tell of thoughtlessness and folly. Many are the human blessings of which to-day finds me the possessor—the one for which I am the most deeply thankful to the Donor of all my blessings—the one which, I believe, more vividly and distinctly to be His direct and immediate gift—is your

affection. My earnest prayer is that the gratitude I feel may be shewn for it, not only with my lips but in my life. As the past recedes, its unpleasantnesses will vanish from the view, or, if they are dimly visible, they will serve as the background from which all that is happy in that past (and there is much of that) will stand out in bold yet subdued relief. Those you love have thought unkindly of me. I have thought and spoken unkindly of them. I am equally blameable; I only hope that a more intimate acquaintance will show the justice as well as the desirability of forgetting all these past misapprehensions. Yes, Ellen, let to-day be a fresh starting-point, not of desires and resolves, but of acts of daily life. 'The shadows of earth' fall on every path—let us disregard them and look only at the bright sun above, and though sacrifices may have to be made, difficulties encountered, and, what is hardest of all, self and inclination conquered, that sun, though clouds may at times intercept it, will shine 'more and more,' until our course is not only like but is in 'the perfect day.' From books I have praised you have learned many of my thoughts; from the book which I have kept back from your set from Mudie's, and which I will bring to-morrow, you may learn the character—the man I like, and that I should wish to be like. The subject, as well as its treatment, renders the 'Memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars' a perfect biographical gem; and when you have read it, I will show you the feature of his character I so much admire—in which I am so deficient—and for which I so ardently long. I am very sorry to hear that you are poorly again (you should have sent me word that I might have called); I do hope you will take care of yourself and soon recover. Let me entreat you (yes, literally entreat) to abandon this London journey. You are not, and you have not been, well, and to expose yourself to the fatigue and excitement of a week in London appears to me to be the height of folly. Do give your own health the benefit of your power of self-denial. Now don't put this away as all nonsense. I am very anxious about it, and I shall be greatly grieved if you persist in running

so great, so unnecessary a risk. One word even before I see you as to your disinclination to justify the remark that you thought only for me ;—very, very different will your conduct to me have to appear before even the most childish petulance could conceive of such a remark. Bear with me, my love, while I say that to avoid this you are going to the very opposite extreme, and that you are really punishing me without any real justification at all. I must say what I think, and I do not think that in this respect you are acting with your accustomed common sense. It has, indeed, been a long week—but I must stay my pen ; otherwise, if I were to give way to my inclination to talk to you on paper I should fill sheets. I am, my very dear Ellen, pre-eminently and specially your own,

“ HENRY.”

On her birthday, February 23rd, 1857, he wrote :

“ MY VERY DEAREST ELLEN,

“ I congratulate you on to-day. I pray that we may both be spared to witness together many, many happy returns of your birthday, and that each occasion may be associated with more grateful recollections, dearer aspirations and brighter anticipations. I wish to give you a Bible—and I would accompany the gift with the request that you will make it the Bible of your daily use, and so recall not only our love, but all that stamps that love, with its fairest features, and most enduring character.

“ HENRY HARTLEY FOWLER.”

The engaged couples of to-day would smile at such an old-fashioned letter and at such an unfashionable gift. But old fashions are not necessarily bad ones, and it remains to be seen whether the new ones build up on such sure foundations married hopes and life.

A few months previously he had sent her a copy of the *Christian Year* with this note :

“ MY DEAREST ELLEN,

“ With the prayer and the hope that we may pass many ‘ Christian years ’ together, I ask you to link a remembrance of that ‘ together ’ to the beautiful and holy thoughts of the modern Church’s greatest, sweetest poet.

“ HENRY.”

But still the clouds returned after the rain, and there were no stretches of peaceful enjoyment even of their engagement ; possibly because the weary waiting-time had tried their patience, and the long drawn-out battle of resistance to public opinion had tried their strength. To woo, and wait and win, is a finer programme on paper than in practice, and there is a jaded aroma about the following letter which tells its own tale :

“ MY DEAREST LOVE,

“ Your note of yesterday was like yourself, ever kind and ever considerate ; and though you have not rightly divined the cause of my insipidity, yet as you have asked me whether you have disappointed me, I must in candour say you have. My earnest seeking indicates the lofty place my ideal must have occupied ; but the real is so much beyond, so much above, all that my imagination had essayed to picture, that were I fully to express my feelings, you would at once and for ever banish that naughty thought which you say has sometimes flitted across your mind. I like to cherish the thought that you cannot (you should not, if you could) know the strength and power of my affection for you until you are constantly exposed to its influence. My brightest anticipation of the future is to make you happy—and it is a selfish anticipation, too, for nothing else could so largely contribute to my own happiness. Therefore, do not for one moment dream of my entertaining the shadow of a dissatisfied thought—no, not even in details. You have been very kind,

and if I at times appear unreasonable in objecting to some of your (what shall I call it ?) devoteeism to that cruel goddess, 'What will they say,' you must recollect what I have endured at the hands of 'they say,' and how ardently I long for her Nemesis. I am depressed I admit ; a to be expected stagnation professionally has readily combined with causes with which you are familiar to compose a draught which I am hourly drinking. I know without any false modesty that I am very, very faulty, that you will have much to subdue and much to bear with ; but the revelation of the light in which I have been portrayed—a light as false as it was unjust—has stunned me. I don't justify, nor do I condemn, the eccentricities of thought and expression in which among one's friends, or those who seemed friends, I have allowed my wayward self to indulge ; but to discover that paradox has been represented as opinion, hyperbole as sober estimate, and irony as accurately expressed conviction, is to discover what might justify me in asking the very question you have put to me. Is my love the thing you have believed it to be ? Are you not disappointed in me ? Thoughts like these do weigh upon me—I cannot help it ; I know I ought to rise above their influence. I know, too, that my happiness ought to be regulated by far higher motives and principles ; but—oh, these buts !—my residence in Wolverhampton has not, I fear, been distinguished by much progress in the Christian life. I am afraid that I am imputing to the atmosphere what I ought to impute to myself ; else I should almost be disposed to say that the atmosphere of London life, with all its temptations, is less dangerous than the lifeless, decorous, do-nothingism, believe-nothingism and good-for-nothingism into which I fear I am gliding. I will add no more. I have partially retailed to you what I am regretting. I do cling to and cherish your love. I value it the more for the storms it has outridden. I know now that it is no exotic which must be carefully shielded from the showers and sunshine of life, and forced into fruition by artificial, sickly heat ; and instead of fretting at any imaginary shortcoming of yours, my only

fret on that score is on account of my own inability to return it as I feel, as I wish. No allusion to the fact, present or future, was made either by J. H. or myself last night; he rode his own pony. - I therefore hope that the mistress of the brown pony will not find him any the worse for my unskilful, though thoroughly enjoyed equestrianism. Now, don't harass yourself about me; do sympathize with me. I value that, and

Believe me, my dearest Ellen,

"Your ever affectionate,

"HENRY."

As the date of his marriage drew near, when there was more need for practical work and less for psychic experiments, there was a distinct change in his mental health. Utilitarianism appealed to him by nature more than idealism; he dedicated his life in politics to the service of the second best, and so it is readily to be understood how his tone changed when there was something tangible to be done, instead of something intangible to be endured; and, if he had been a woman, to be enjoyed throughout the inactive days of a long engagement. On the 27th July, 1857, within three months of their marriage, his letter breathes a perfectly different atmosphere. One feels he is no longer cramped by strained conditions, but that he has taken the reins into his own hands, and is more natural, much simpler, less morbid in his thoughts and expression.

"MY DEAREST ELLEN,

"I duly received your kind letter of Saturday and was very grateful to you for it. I was glad to hear you thought your cough less troublesome, and I do hope you, and it will, before you return home, dissolve partnership. I thoroughly sympathize in all your views as to the unsuitableness and the unpleasantness of trifling with what we both regard as so serious; with the hints you have given I shall be quite prepared. I think it will be a pleasure to come down, even if it is for so short a time; and I, therefore, at

present, and D.V., propose to leave here on Wednesday morning by the nine-thirty train, which arrives at Leeds at two-twenty. I have been working away at Summerfield—the gas-fittings are done, the rooms measured for the carpets—the rugs I have postponed until you return that you may decide upon the sizes. I am glad that your tone is ‘happy,’ that the future even in its details looks ‘propitious.’ The power (to me unexpected) of investing your home with some of the advantages of taste and comfort I highly prize; and though it is but detail, and in a sense subordinate, yet it does tinge with a pleasant tone our future prospects. But most of all I do anticipate, I do pray for, the commencement and the establishment of a home which shall, in the Arnold sense of the word, respond to and exhibit a daily Christian influence. An influence which can, which ought to, seek its sphere not only, or perhaps so much, in special efforts, on occasions peculiarly and distinctly religious, but in the routine of life, in business, in domestic and social pleasures, as also in domestic and social disappointments. And, Ellen dear, the difficulty will be to carry this out in little, apparently unimportant things. Perhaps—nay, I am sure—we shall fail in being all, in doing all, we could wish, we do wish. But the effort will be a noble discipline, which will reward itself and make us happier, better, dearer to each other. I could enlarge a great deal on this subject, but I reserve it. I miss you very much, and shall be very glad to see you, and with kindest love, believe me to be, my own dear Ellen,

“Yours ever affectionately,

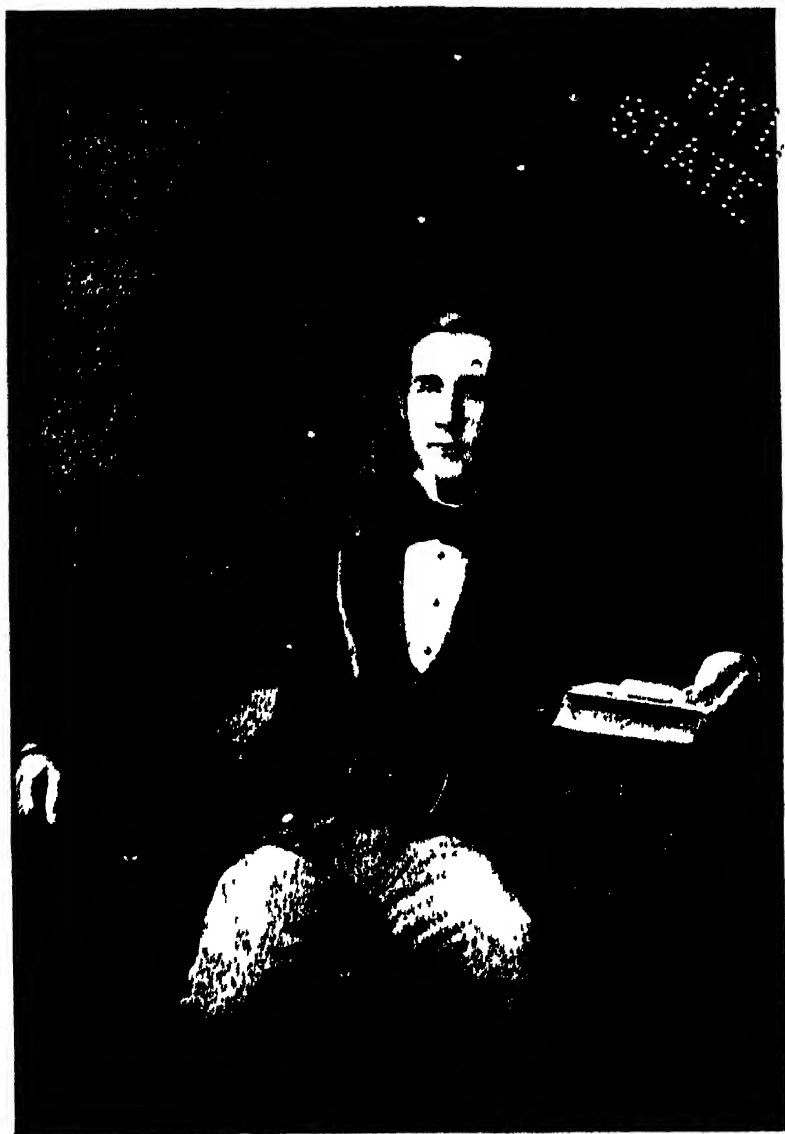
“HENRY.”

There is only one other letter of his written before his marriage to be found, and that is a purely practical one, dealing with the necessary number of forks and spoons, and their prices, and the size of a suitable sideboard. He adds: “I did not tell you that I had received an invitation to lecture at the Athenæum this session. I have replied that my social arrangements will preclude my acceptance. I have also had an invite to join Mr. Campbell and

a few others, who are about to commence a 'Working Man's College.' And now, my own dear love, you will in my few lines to Miss P. read my theory (may it be our practice) of wedded life. I cannot retrace the past, the wonderful and yet wise manner in which our present has reached its auspicious and propitious state, without feelings of the deepest gratitude. Our future ought to be worthy."

This book is but a puny effort to show how worthy that future proved itself to be.

On the 6th October, 1857, at St. Mark's Church, Wolverhampton, Henry Hartley Fowler and Ellen Thorneycroft were made man and wife; and from that day the sunshine of domestic happiness began to ripen and mature a character, which from his earliest youth had been subject to a Spartan strictness, and which, owing to disappointments, difficulties and injustices, might have hardened into a depressed and morbid mould. To touch upon the perfectness of their married union with truth, and yet good taste, seems almost impossible for any biographer, much more one for whom it is so noble a heritage and so sweet and sacred a memory.



Henry Fowler. Aged 27

CHAPTER III

1858—1862

MUNICIPAL LIFE

"The noblest motive is the public good"—VIRGIL.

"Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things"—S. MATTHEW.

"There are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

FROM the date of the fulfilment of his one great ambition in his marriage, my father seems to have steadily set his face towards the accomplishment of the other—that of representing Wolverhampton in Parliament; and it was with a view to this end that he entered into the municipal life within his reach, therein to learn the rudiments of that fuller public life which loomed before him. His work was always of his best, but his municipal work showed distinctly the added strength of being, as it were, a foundation-stone of the greater work which he intended to build upon it. It was not merely in the sequence of events that this happened, but it was the design of a set purpose on his part from which he never departed during the twenty years which lay between its beginning and its end in Parliamentary representation. The first public speech of Henry Fowler's in Wolverhampton, of which a record remains, was made at the Wolverhampton Working Men's College, which he was largely instrumental in founding, under

the presidency of Lord Wrottesley. He struck there the key-note of his attitude towards, and interest in, the working men of the country, to whom he was ever such a wise and loyal friend. The working classes have had many great friends, they have some remarkable ones still; but in Henry Fowler they had not only a great, but a truly good friend—good to them and good for them, a distinction which is sometimes lost sight of in the excitement and enthusiasm of political and popular ardour.

The Working Men's College he regarded as an institution for social education. He was keenly alive to the great social qualities and practices of the poor. "I believe," he said at the first annual meeting, on October 8th, 1858, "that no body of men and women in this country understand so fully, or exemplify so beautifully, that one idea of society which is summed up in the words, 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.' They do feel for, they do sympathize with, they do help each other, and it is because their social sympathies are so strong that their social influence is so powerful." He pointed out how dangerous is the influence of ignorance, and how the remedy for ignorance is to be found in such institutions as the College—not to make men scholars, for that would be a doubtful good, even if it were a possible one, but to teach them from the lore of scholars to think more widely, more deeply and therefore more truly, and thereby fit themselves to be worthy citizens of their country as well as competent workmen of their craft. "Regard the influence of this education in respect to the relation of the working man and his master. Depend upon it that it will be the dawn of a better day for masters as well as workmen when workmen understand the why and wherefore of their work, the principles of that mechanism which they are applying, and the laws of nature whose forces they are controlling and adapting. It is the true interest of both master and workman that both should understand and appreciate the distinctions between capital and labour, that their interests are mutual and inseparable, and the worse than suicidal folly of attempting to injure either through the instrumentality of the other." As all great thoughts and true teaching live with immortal youth, for time can never stale nor fashions falsify them,

such words as these, uttered over fifty years ago, speak straight to the modern striker with a real reproof, a wholesome admonition. The conclusion of his speech on the above occasion shows how his thoughts ever turned towards that home of legislature wherein he longed to dwell, and for which subsequently his love was strong almost as the love of home. "The gorgeous palace of Westminster is, to my mind, no unfit type of the nation for whose legislature it has been reared. Neither secular nor ecclesiastical in its architecture, it happily blends the best features of both, combining the most hallowing and inspiring memories of antiquity with the latest developments of practical science. Massive in its lightest decorations and exquisitely beautiful in its most colossal parts, it is a wondrous symbol of the English character and of the English nature."

In October, 1858, Henry Fowler was elected Town Councillor of St. Matthew's Ward in Wolverhampton, and his first municipal speech was made at the mayoral banquet in the following November, when his uncle, John Hartley, was the new Mayor. It must be remembered in dealing with my father's life, that he was essentially a man of speeches, not of letters, nor of literature, nor of any exposition of his thoughts and feelings other than by spoken words. And therefore it is to his speeches that we must turn to find the true reflection of the man. He was a most interesting conversationalist, and astonished people by the wide range of thought and information which his talk portrayed. The importance of talking well was ever upheld in his household, and the crime of dullness most severely criticized. When as quite little children we went down to dessert before going to bed, we always were expected to tell him something we had learned that day which we never knew before; and I can remember my childish satisfaction at the mirth it excited when I produced the remarkable piece of information that "in India children could be widows at four!" As we grew older, when he returned tired from London for a week-end at home, he would sit down to dinner with the request, "Amuse me"; which we were always expected to do; and I can remember, when driving up with him to Wolverhampton, if we were silent for a few minutes he would say reproachfully: "You

are not very brilliant this morning." The necessity for bright, interesting conversation was so impressed upon us, that we were simply astonished when reviewers found something remarkable in the conversations of my sister's first novel *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*, and expressed their doubt as to its trueness to life. It was so exactly the talk that we had heard at home that we were immensely surprised at these criticisms. My father was not himself a witty man, but he thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed wit in others. It has been thought and said that he lacked a sense of humour, but that was not really so, as regards the sense of appreciation of humour. He was not an originator of humour, he was much too seriously-minded a man to be a quick discoverer of humour; nevertheless, when the humour of a situation was pointed out to him he could understand, and appreciate, and enjoy it to the fullest extent. And his sense of humour was not only born in him, but it increased as he grew older, and was very much fostered in his home-life. He possessed the unusual attribute, especially in a man, of thoroughly enjoying a joke at his own expense, and when levelled at him by one of his own children his satisfaction was complete.

On a platform a power leaped to his lips which proved the orator born, not made, and he could always unconsciously command the best language in which to convey his wisdom, his inspiration and his common sense to the convictions of his audience.

He began his municipal career with the best possible stimulus, in that he felt and found in it the principle of that representative and administrative government which his soul loved. His first words to his fellow-Councillors were to remind them that they had been placed in a responsible position, and to express the assurance that they would merit the honour by discharging the responsibility. "I use the word 'honour' advisedly," he continued, with that impressive warmth which in his speeches always brought a responsive glow from his hearers, "because I wish to enter my protest, feeble though it may be, against the fashion, I had almost said the cant, which regards municipal honours and municipal offices with a feeling somewhat akin to contempt. It would be idle to ignore the existence of such a feeling, and it is our duty

to join issue with it, to show its intrinsic absurdity, and its evil and mischievous tendencies." He pointed out that it was then barely twenty-three years since the Municipal Reform Bill recreated the whole municipal system, and it was barely ten since the legislature, by the Public Health Acts, entrusted the most important and beneficial of local powers to Corporations; and he would ask any candid, unprejudiced man to look at the corporate towns in their most material aspects—their lighting, paving, highways, water, police, and whole internal arrangements—and then say whether there existed on the face of this earth a system which had accomplished such results for such a large number of towns in such a small space of time as Corporations had accomplished in this country. This true appreciation of the powers and privileges of Corporations in town-life no doubt prompted him, many years later, in his successful effort to bring similar ones within the reach of urban and rural districts, and to give the people, whether they were town workmen and citizens, or whether they were farm-labourers and country craftsmen, the right of ruling their own community for the common good. He would not say that Corporations, Town Councils, or even Parliaments, had not their failings; and never a man found so few in the latter as did Henry Fowler during his Parliamentary life! No one of them had always done right; neither did he say that municipal constituencies or Parliamentary constituencies always acted with propriety; both sometimes made mistakes; but he was not going to sacrifice either institution, whether Parliamentary or Municipal—to each of which the country owed so much—for a few incidental defects.

We live now in an age when rhetoric and sentiment are out of fashion; but in days past much enthusiasm and enterprise were kindled by eloquence and emotion, and the dull drudgery of daily work was often lifted on to a higher, and therefore more effective, plane by the expressed idealism which is now so completely out of date. The whole municipal life of Wolverhampton was stirred by the powerful presence of its new member. My father was never a figurehead. Whatever was being done, he not only did it himself, in heart if not in action, but he thought out how much better it might be done, and tried to accomplish that end, and

this he carried out in even the merest details of life. He never saw anything done, however trifling, without seeing a possible improvement in the method. As he drove to and from Wolverhampton, he would be continually saying how much better it would have been if the coachman had not overtaken this cart, or crossed the tram-lines before meeting that; and once I remember his declaring how differently he should have acted from what the footman had done in some matter. And when one of us said: "But if Frederick had been as clever as you, he would have been a Secretary of State and not a footman," his genial smile dispelled his disapproval; but he still hankered after a more perfect performance of the simple duty in question.

Directly he entered the Town Council he began to act, and the first scheme which occupied his attention was that of the proper drainage of the town. A special committee had been for months considering the sewerage question, and, of course, there was the usual opposition to any good, however great, which costs ready money; but Henry Fowler was not one to sit down to such public and moral lethargy of opinion and action. He spoke out, and with the usual result, that his words caught fire and their flame was a consuming one.

"We cannot believe that there is in this Corporation a man ignorant enough to oppose a scheme of general sewerage on the ground of its needlessness. Were the opponents of this greatest of sanitary improvements to rest their opposition here, their opposition would be as futile as it would be absurd. They are too wise for that. The necessity of the sewerage will be admitted—it dare not be denied; the desirability will be granted, the intention at some future time to carry out the works will be solemnly declared; and then will come the 'but.' And the usual clap-trap platitudes about 'the present not being the time,' and the usual clap-trap falsehoods about the heavy taxation of the ratepayers will be urged in the most candid and friendly spirit. Of course the sewerage works will be expensive. It is better—it is cheaper—to spend the money in the prevention of disease than in the cure; it is cheaper to prevent crime than to punish it; it is cheaper (bear witness our increased income-tax) to prevent invasion than

to conquer and destroy the invader. What is the cost to Wolverhampton, not in desolated homes, in widowed wives, or orphaned children (our financial economists do not, they cannot, include these in their miserable calculations), but in pounds, shillings and pence of one visit of cholera? What is the cost to the town of the chronic typhus, and of other preventable, but fatal, maladies, which have raised the mortality of Wolverhampton so high? The sewerage is a public necessity; it is the disgrace of the Town Council that the necessity has existed so long; it will be their crime if it exists any longer."

As would be expected, the petty opposition to so great a public good as the proposed sewerage scheme finally fizzled out in the face of such powerful championship as this. The work was begun and completed, and to the end of his life my father felt a pardonable pride in this his first victory for the people's good.

His idea at that time of public life, however, was not restricted to the Town Council. Though that was the main artery through which his efforts flowed, he continued his interest in the Working Men's College, and also was a distinct power in the Young Men's Christian Institute in Wolverhampton. In his speeches to both of them we find a wider range of thought and feeling than in the Council Chamber; and, as a young man speaking to young men, we see the impress of many of the standards of conduct and thought which ruled his later life. On the second annual meeting of the College, under the presidency of Lord Dartmouth, he set forth his views on "Success in Life," and there was no subject which appealed more strongly to his interest. He quoted the well-known line: "'Tis not in mortals to command success"; and immediately after, according to his almost universal custom, he qualified that statement until it became almost threadbare of meaning. He urged that the line refers to the exceptions rather than the rule, and that success to those who deserve it follows as naturally, as inevitably, as the law of cause and effect, and that, independently of rank, station and circumstances in life. He had been born and bred in this theory, and his history is surely a powerful illustration of it. Perhaps his gauge of success was a wider one than the ordinary one. He believed that a working

man, who was born and died as a working man, could yet make of his life a distinct success. "Working men," he said, "have succeeded, ought to succeed, and will succeed, in as great a degree and with as true results as any other of the classes of men composing our social system." They could not all win a world-wide celebrity, he further pointed out, but "the simple story of a happy man's life will be a true success."

"Your own intellect instructed, your own moral character rightly developed, the domestic graces and the social virtues, which can present as bright a bloom and diffuse as sweet a fragrance in the cottage as in the palace, planted, and reared, and nurtured in your homes, will constitute a success in life which will create and ensure the truest happiness."

And again in an address at the Young Men's Christian Institute we find a still more characteristic expression of himself, in which we see the reflection of the man, even as I knew him so many years later. My father was not a man of physical courage—he lacked all spirit of dash and daring: of moral courage he not only possessed a measure, but it wholly possessed him. It could hardly be called in his case a virtue, because it was a characteristic. It was never the slightest effort to him to proclaim loyalty to the religious principles in which his life was built. It was no temptation to him ever to be ashamed of the creeds of his fathers, the Church of his fathers, the God of his fathers. And though of course the majority of his speeches deal chiefly with secular subjects, here and there an occasion arose which gave him an opportunity of simply and fearlessly stating the deep religious convictions of his soul. As it is usually more of an effort to a young man than to an older one to reveal religious depths, the full, clear note of this address is more remarkable, because he was at the time under thirty years of age; and though we have seen from his early letters how strongly he himself was influenced by such convictions, it is a very different thing to write a love-letter in that strain, and to address a meeting of chiefly young men from a secular platform. "It is a very clever manoeuvre," he declared, "to affix the word 'cant' to the recognition of Christianity as influencing the realities of daily life, and a supreme

absurdity, as well as the irresistible power of a nickname, has rarely been so signally exemplified. Christianity should not only influence our legislation, and literature, commerce, and education, but if its principles were systematically excluded from any one of these departments of human effort the most disastrous results would follow. I firmly believe that England owes all her national glory to her Christianity. The 'peace and happiness, the truth and justice,' which render our island the admiration of the civilized world, are based upon its religion and piety; and if it ever abandons these, England will pass to the same tomb whither nations as illustrious and apparently as immortal have preceded it."

It is worthy of note how steeped in the language of the Prayer-book was Henry Fowler's mind. We find him dropping into the old familiar phrases again and again. This proves how deeply love of the liturgy was ingrained in his nature, and that he had inherited that love from his father, who was born a Churchman, and carried his early traditions out into the new Society which John Wesley had founded in the bosom of the Church; but which, unhappily, drifted away from its founder's design into a branch of Nonconformity. It was in the above address that he uttered the following extremely characteristic words about books and newspapers. His love for them was life-long; his library was the *sanctum sanctorum* of his home, and he read literally scores of newspapers each week. Some of these in later years he reviled, and was apt to quote concerning their daily inaccuracy; none the less, he read them. Perhaps his first love for them still lingered from those early days when he felt for them as this speech describes, or perhaps in after years, in spite of all their faults, he loved them still. "I am proud of the newspaper literature of England. The vast stores of intellectual wealth which the daily and weekly press scatter abroad through the land is one of the most wondrous marvels of this marvellous age. You may hear someone say: 'I don't care about politics; we had better mind our business and let politics alone.' Don't care about politics! Pause before you repeat so foolish and dangerous and absurd an opinion; you ought to care about politics; and if you don't care about politics, you deserve to live under one of those paternal governments who

will take care that you don't care about them. Politics are but another name for our social rights and social duties ; if you retain the one you discharge the other ; but you must clearly understand the value of both. The newspaper not only familiarizes you with political events, but it tells of every stride of science and every development of philanthropy, and if you exclude me from my newspaper you exclude me from one of the most interesting and most instructive modes of communion with my fellow-men which it is possible for me to enjoy."

And of books he afterwards spoke, beginning with a quotation which I have heard him repeat times without number. "Reading makes a full man." "You must remember that it is only systematic study of works—really standard books and not mere periodical playthings—that will fill our minds with what is worth having or retaining. Various minds have various tastes, and what is interesting to one is dull and dry to another. Select a favourite study, work it well, stick to it, master it, and whether it is the biography of individuals, or of nations—whether it is the laws or forces or beauties of Nature—whether it is the architecture of the glorious globe itself, or the edifices which the genius of man has reared upon it—whether it is the mechanism of the body or the mind—whether it is the works of man, or the revelation of God—choose your subject, and, whatever it be, never rest till you have made it your own ; for, depend upon it, it is better to have a thorough knowledge of one of these things than a superficial smattering of many." These precepts he practised as well as preached, only it was the thorough knowledge of many that was his aim. History of peoples, rather than Courts, theology of every denomination, and, above all, politics in every shape and form, he studied and mastered and made his own. He was an omnivorous reader of all kinds of literature, with the exception, perhaps, of poetry ; every evening of his life that was spent at home was spent in reading, and he never passed a week without buying at least one new book. He used to say : "This is my one extravagance." In fact he had no personal form of expenditure such as hunting or shooting, not expensive gardens and many greenhouses, though he always slightly hankered after those

latter luxuries, not a home farm from which he could enjoy dairy and other produce; nothing but the passion for books. On a journey he would always buy at least a dozen newspapers of both parties, and when once someone commented on such a very large allowance he said: "They are my tobacco. You would probably smoke quite their value on such a journey as this." He was never a smoker, and was most economical in all personal matters.

His first gift to Wolverhampton in 1859 was a drinking fountain, erected in the worst part of the town, and with typical foresight he made terms with the Town Council for an adequate supply of water for it, which, in view of the defective supply at that time, was by no means an unwise precaution. At a mayoral banquet that same year he expressed his views on the appointment of magistrates, and as the years revolve it is strange how the same subjects are discussed, and the same questions raised, by succeeding generations. These pages contain many an opinion of his which have a place in the discussions of to-day, as pointedly as when they were uttered many years ago. "The appointment of magistrates should be dictated by no political influence, by no party prejudice, and by no private interest, but on the recommendation of those best qualified to give such a recommendation. Sound common sense, unblemished personal character, a suitable social status, and a matured and well-digested experience, are the best qualifications for an English magistrate."

In 1860 Henry Fowler was made an Alderman of the borough, and the following year he waged another war on behalf of the people of Wolverhampton, to obtain an adequate water supply for that town. A new Water Works Company had been formed to remedy the non-success of an old effete one, but Henry Fowler disputed their right to refuse to keep a constant supply of water at pressure, for use in case of fire, both night and day without extra charge, and this they declined to do. And when they protested that more payment was required for this constant supply, as the position of the town which is set on a hill required perpetual pumping, an expensive process, to obtain a sufficient supply, the people's champion contended that it had already been paid for,

as the company had been given the monopoly of supplying the town with water with a right to break up the streets, and other privileges, and "it was the spirit of English legislation that where the law gave large powers to companies or individuals it taxed them to a certain extent for the benefit of the public." A Parliamentary Committee was then appointed by the Town Council, of which Henry Fowler was elected chairman, to fight a Bill for extended powers which the new company was introducing into Parliament. This Bill was brought before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, who decided that the town of Wolverhampton was not properly supplied with water, but, on account of some legal technicality in their original Bill, the Council's contention could not be upheld. To sit down meekly under the decisions of the Upper House has not been a distinctive attitude of the Liberal Party, and Henry Fowler then entered the lists in a wider warfare than that of a local and municipal matter. He fired his fellow-townsmen with a fighting zeal, and he would not let them bow to the powers that be, even though they must have seemed great powers to a young, untried man, yet none the less was he undaunted by them. His convictions of right and justice and fair play were outraged by their decision, and with the unself-conscious assurance of a young David he went out to meet this armour-clad Goliath with no weapon but the smooth stones of his natural power of speech. He urged first in the Council Chamber: "That the town was in this anomalous position: they had laid their case before a Committee of the House of Lords, where every claim they had made they had justified, and every grievance of which they had complained had been admitted, adjudicated upon, and decided, and yet they had been told by the legislature that they could not provide them with a remedy. He had always been taught that there was no wrong without a remedy; that if wrong was brought before the legislature it was their duty to provide remedial measures, and the question for the Council now was whether they would apply to another branch of the legislature to ask them to do what the Upper House had refused to do."

The challenge to fight thrown down by the Town Council led the Water Works to listen to reason—to agree with the enemy

whiles they were in the way with him—and as the result of negotiations carried on between that company and the Town Council Committee, which was practically the voice of Henry Fowler, the Water Works were bought by the Corporation in 1867. During the last decade of his life my father thus referred to that transaction: “Although the purchase was denounced as an act of supreme folly, ignorance and extravagance, which must result in disaster and disgrace, there was no one now who would not say that the step which was then taken was wise and successful in the interests of the community. In the years 1871 to 1873 there was an aggregate loss of £2,100, but in 1878 the Council was able to make a very large reduction in the water rate, and at the same time to do, as it has done ever since, add largely to its resources. It gave the people the advantage of an unlimited supply of pure water, and the income was now over £32,000 a year. The purchase of the Water Works had been a complete success in the interests of the town.”

Henry Fowler was never afraid of the initial cost of anything which he knew would prove of lasting value afterwards, and he could discriminate with a wonderfully accurate judgment between a legitimate expenditure and extravagance. The former he never stinted, he strongly deprecated being penny wise and pound foolish, and he realized to the full the practical truth which lies behind the shrewd, homely, Staffordshire saying—that you cannot get anything for nothing, and only very little for sixpence.

CHAPTER IV

1862—1863

MAYORALTY

"When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice."—*Proverbs of Solomon*

"His years but young, but his experience old,
His head unmingled, but his judgment ripe"

SHAKESPEARE

IN November, 1862, Henry Fowler was elected Mayor of Wolverhampton, an honour in those days for one who had had the short career of only seven years in the town, and whose age was far below the usual one at which men had been thought fit to be elected to such a position. His late father-in-law, Mr. George Benjamin Thorneycroft, had been the first Mayor of the borough, and his uncle, Mr. John Hartley, had preceded him in that office by only a very few years, but it was not to family influence that he owed his success. He was a highly-educated man, he was an increasingly successful one in his profession, but it was something more than this which marked him from his youth upwards for high administrative office. He was wise as well as gifted, he was strong as well as eloquent, he had good judgment, and sound common sense; but welding all these qualities into one was the power of his personality. It is as difficult to locate that power as it is to fix the boundaries of charm—one can only bear witness to its existence by its results. The celebrated saying of Cæsar's, "Veni, vidi, vici," was the epitome of that power. Wherever Henry Fowler came he filled a place; whatever he saw around him he looked at with eyes that really saw, and a spirit which insisted on understanding, and from that vantage ground he

worked and won. It was so in this earliest experience in the Town Council. The moment he entered it he filled it with new life, he was not just one of a number, he was one who led, and served, and so ruled, numbers. He grasped the meaning of municipal life and saw its possibilities, and then he set out to practise them. He was a fighter in those days far more than in his maturer, perhaps wiser, years, when he believed more in the might of arbitration, and lacked the necessary one-sidedness of a purely political partisan. There were at that time some great wrongs in the town to be redressed. The Sewerage Scheme, the Water Works Scheme, both owed their success to his leadership. And though he led from the platform by the enthusiasm which his eloquence never failed to call forth, he was no less powerful in the Council Chamber and Committee room, where the actual working-out of a scheme required far more wisdom and knowledge and tact than are ever needed by the mere orator.

His established character for effective work is proved by a cutting from a leading newspaper of that date. There was great distress in Lancashire, and it alluded to a chaos of formless thought in relation to the duty of relieving that distress, which it was needful some ruling spirit should reduce to order: "Aware of this, and equally aware that 1863 would find Mr. Henry Hartley Fowler Mayor of Wolverhampton, we waited patiently the advent of that gentleman to the position of chief Magistrate of the town, in the full assurance that the Mayoralty would be but a few hours old ere he convened a town's meeting on the subject, and, pointing with a sure and certain index the path of duty, nobly led the way. We are not mistaken. As quickly as the press could stamp the Mayoral signature in printer's ink, a notice convening a meeting for Friday next was issued, and the Mayor on all occasions so thoroughly works out for those he calls to his aid the machinery for the labour he conceives, that the meeting will easily discover what it has to do and the best means for doing it."

In response to his election as Mayor, he said:

"Municipal institutions have formed one of the most enduring foundations upon which the mighty fabric of English liberty has been reared. They embody the soundest of all constitutional

maxims—that taxation and representation are inseparable. They illustrate that true principle of self-government which is the characteristic of a free people, and they rear the strongest bulwark against that ever-encroaching system of centralization which is a sure harbinger of an irresponsible despotism.” And at his first meeting after his election—the one above referred to for the distress in Lancashire—having deplored the inclination to hold back from extending relief because the landed and other interests had not sufficiently led the way, he wound up with these characteristic words :

“ Let us do our duty in the spirit of the good Samaritan without stopping to inquire whether priest or Levite has passed by on the other side—whether men, whose official position in life would lead us to expect it of them, have done their duty, let us simply, in the presence of this suffering, starving, bleeding humanity, do our duty, and we shall reflect upon it with satisfaction to the last hour of our lives.”

During his Mayoralty he promoted the interests of the Wolverhampton Orphanage, the Grammar School, and every educational institute. He spoke for the first time on February 4th, 1863, as far as records show, on the subject of education, which was to him always of such interest and importance. And his keynote there, as in every other branch of thought, was that of Christian duty. “ Education to be of any value must have Christianity for its basis. I should have very little sympathy with this institution,” he was speaking at the Wolverhampton Orphanage, “ as a benevolent means of feeding, clothing and humanely training a large number of children, if the training imparted were dissociated from that sound Christian education, which you know to be at the bottom, not only of all morality, but of all real good in this world as well as of all happy prospects in the next. . . . Children thus educated will, in every sense of the word, do their duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call them.” Again, at the distribution of prizes won by students at the University local examination, he forcibly deplored the fact that, while the elementary schools were showing great progress, the secondary ones were at a standstill. “ The education of the children of the

class which depended entirely on manual labour had become a science which had attracted to its consideration and development the energy and ability of some of the foremost thinkers of our country, while at the same time the education of the sons of the class who depend entirely on mental labour, or a harmonious combination of mental and manual labour, was left to the mercenary speculation of those whose incapacity and whose failure in other departments of life, were their sole qualifications for embarking in a pursuit where, unfortunately, incompetency was no bar to pecuniary success." This was a true picture of middle-class education fifty years ago, and, with the eye of a prophet, he looked on beyond the wrong to the ultimate redressing of that wrong. In thus lifting it up to the scorn of men he started the wheels of that vast machinery of public opinion, which is all-powerful in dealing with the questions of the day. It is the politician who practically works that machine, but it is the prophet who first sets it in motion. And this was Henry Fowler's mission in those early days before he put on the harness of the practical politician. He lived to see many of his ideals fulfilled—some of them even out-stepped—but the need of Secondary schools he saw satisfied; and it is worthy of note that his son-in-law, Mr. Alfred Felkin, was appointed one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Secondary Schools in 1906. "It is a happy feature of our age and country," he declared, "that the whole question of education is invested with growing importance, and while we gratefully regard the progress made in recent years we should make a great mistake if we rested on our oars and regarded the problem of education as solved. If the Greek idea of education was the cultivation of the beautiful, and the Roman the acquisition of the useful, we have yet, I think, to learn how in our English education thoroughly to blend the two, without sacrificing any of the distinctive excellencies of either. While the practical experience of the merchant, the manufacturer, the professional man and the tradesman, was dissatisfied with any education, however it might be graced by classical beauty, which left the pupil ignorant of the history of his own country, and unacquainted with the language and literature of the living nations of Europe—a stranger to those great

laws of the physical, mechanical and moral sciences which lay the basis of all moral and physical progress—while thus dissatisfaction is felt, the day is coming, and coming rapidly, I trust, when those who sway the destiny of the education of the middle-class will vigorously and promptly affirm and endorse that dissatisfaction and themselves apply the remedy. . . . The man who aspires to be an educated man must be always learning, and no matter how gifted we may be, how rare our attainments, or how unflagging our industry, the life-long lesson must still be ‘how little we know.’ ” He believed that the boys of that day were receiving a much better education than their fathers received, but he doubted whether the girls were receiving anything so good as their mothers had. There was an excess of what was useless and ornamental, and what they wanted was a robustness and accuracy and judgment, which, combined with the acquisition of the ordinary branches of knowledge, would be an incalculable advantage. Their seminaries needed to be stripped of mawkish sentimentality and the teaching therein reduced to a science as it was in the normal and national schools.

It was during the year of Henry Fowler’s mayoralty that the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII., both came of age and was married. On the latter occasion the Mayor gave a great banquet in Wolverhampton, and during his speech he made the following allusions to the Houses of Parliament. “The House of Lords,” he said, “was the embodiment of the purest and noblest aristocracy in the world. He was a very short-sighted politician who depreciated the advantages which a nation derived from the possession of an independent body of nobles, who, by ancestral traditions, as well as by vast possessions, were the hereditary champions of both liberty and order. The English House of Lords, comprising as it did the descendants of those stout old Barons who laid the foundations of English freedom and power, and enriched as it was from time to time by those noblemen of nature who, by their eminent abilities and distinguished success, honoured themselves and added lustre to the nation, contained England’s noblest sons, and made a house of peerless peers that deserved and received the homage of

the British nation." This eulogy in these days sounds a little out of date on the lips of a Liberal statesman ; but it was because he was a true statesman at heart that he discerned the worth of a power which was not under the heel of the constituencies, and which possessed a judgment independent of the confused and confusing currents of election campaigns. He described the House of Commons, and perhaps here, too, his description is a little out of date, " as the most venerable, powerful, and in the highest and truest sense of the word, the most gentlemanly of legislative assemblies. He believed in it, and knew that the development of the House of Commons and the growth of England's greatness had been contemporaneous, and so long as there were free thought, free speech, free men in the country, so long would the British House of Commons—the noblest temple freedom had erected—find respectful and devoted admirers." He also made this an occasion for expressing some of those feelings of devoted loyalty to the Throne of England which was ever a very powerful factor in his public life. " There are occasions when we more especially express our ardent attachment to that system of government under which it is our happiness to live, and our grateful appreciation of the admirable manner in which the Queen has embodied—we might almost say perfectly developed—the ideas of a constitutional monarchy , and as we contemplate the desolating despotisms of the sword, and the sanguinary tyranny of the mob, which at the present time are ravaging some of the fairest portions of the earth, we rally more closely round the Crown of England as the purest symbol and the safest guard of individual freedom and of national honour. To-night we do not think so much of Her Majesty as the monarch of a mighty nation , we think of her as the mother of an eldest son, who has to-day embarked on the voyage of domestic life. We shall never forget—history will never forget—how unselfishly the Queen discharged all the duties of a constitutional sovereign ; but to-night we more especially remember how she has associated the correct performance of all the duties of her exalted station with the simplest and sublimest duties of womanhood. As a daughter, a wife, a mother—alas ! that we should have to add as a widow—the Queen has linked together all those home

connections which sanctify all the relationships of life in every sphere. And therefore the rejoicings of this day will not be the rejoicings merely of a loyal etiquette, but the genuine sympathies and feelings of a nation that knows how to appreciate the domestic virtues, which dignify and beautify both the cottage and the palace. We have good reason to hope and believe that the sunshine of this day will pierce the dark clouds of that great sorrow which has cast so sad a shadow over the Queen's life ; and though her happy home can never be again complete, and though her one great loss can never be supplied, yet in the increasing happiness of her children, their domestic enjoyments, in their public usefulness, in their constant endeavour to imitate their father's bright example, we trust and believe that the Queen will find an abiding consolation and a continuing comfort." Of the Prince of Wales he said : " I cannot help feeling a glow of justifiable pride on account of the perfect harmony which subsists between the most venerable antiquities of our constitution and the most intelligent opinions and requirements of the present day. Within the last half century the iron hoof of the invader and irrepressible explosions of intestine misery have reconstructed the map of Europe and obliterated the most ancient and illustrious titles ; but this day the Heir-apparent of the British throne has been welcomed to the privileges of that exalted station by the title which for six hundred years has been associated with that proud position, and amid the national affection which more resembled the triumph of some popular idol than the independent loyalty of the greatest and freest nation on earth "

On proposing the health of the Mayor, Lord Dartmouth said : " The burgesses of Wolverhampton did well to put at their head that gentleman in the civic chair ; and they might well be proud of being represented by so worthy a man and by so eloquent an orator. They might depend upon it that the true secret of their real progress lay in their having among them a man like Mr. Henry Hartley Fowler."

The whole year of his mayoralty was simply packed with public engagements, each one of which my father seems to have used as an opportunity for the high-toned oratory and wise teaching

which always characterized his speeches. However small the occasion might be, he made it great by the introduction and inspiration of his great personality. Though his platform might be of the humblest, his influence was of the highest, and he seems to have perpetually poured forth such a torrent of eloquence during that year, that it was remembered as absolutely unique in the history of the town's life. All these early speeches of his give us a mirror in which to see the reflection of his mind while it was being prepared and matured for the larger work he was eventually to undertake, and we find in them the germ of all his future statesmanship. His broad-mindedness was always remarkable, and in a speech made by him as Mayor, when laying the foundation-stone of a Baptist chapel, he showed its secret: "I think that bigotry is the narrowest narrowness of a narrow mind, and I venture to say that no man with either head or heart has ever attempted to expose the miserable prejudices of his sectarian exclusiveness to the sunlight of another world. They might carry their party emblems to the grave's mouth, but they were obliged to leave them there to form another element in that corruption which was emphatically of the earth earthy." And in a subsequent speech he said: "I may have occasion to extol the virtues of Methodism as the religion of my choice, but I do not do so in any prejudice or bigotry, for bigotry is a thing which from my heart I abhor." When presiding at a meeting in Willenhall in the same year, which marked the conclusion of an effort for the enlarging of an old and the building of a new Wesleyan chapel, in which he had been largely instrumental, one of the prominent townsmen, Mr. James Tildesley, in thanking him for his services, humorously as it seemed at the time, prophetically as after events proved it to be, remarked that "they would more amply repay him when Willenhall was made a municipal borough by electing him as their representative in Parliament." Willenhall was in later years the principal outlying town of the borough of East Wolverhampton, which my father represented for so many years.

In his official position that year he touched another branch of the country's service, on which he was for the most part silent, but this owing to the civil character of the offices he held rather

than any lack of sympathy with the military spirit. And therefore his opinions expressed on the occasion of a dinner given to the local volunteers are of special interest as one of the few records we have of his thoughts and feelings with regard to military matters; and they are words which seem weighted with a new interest, on account of the strong stirring of opinions which is being felt throughout the country to-day regarding the great necessity for a far wider volunteer service.

"It was a maxim of the Duke of Wellington's," he quoted then, as I have heard him say hundreds of times since, "that whoever wanted anything well done must do it himself; and the whole commercial, political and municipal life of England is one long-continued commentary on the wisdom of that maxim. The volunteer movement is simply the result of the application of that maxim to, what I may call one of the prime duties, or rather prime instincts, of a nation—its own self-defence. The very moment that the English nation grasped the idea that some foreign foe might even entertain the possibility of invading the shores of our native land, it was felt that our means of self-defence must be not only such as would ensure the utter ruin of any mad invader, but that they must also be such as, in the eyes of the world, would render any attempt a hopeless absurdity. Therefore, while we are taxing to the uttermost every appliance which military science and military strategy could employ, we feel that something more is needed, something more impregnable than our targets, something more enduring than granite fortifications. When some future Macaulay tells the story of the last ten years of English history, there are few pictures which he will paint with more brilliant colours than that which will describe how, as at the bidding of some enchanter's wand, one hundred and fifty thousand volunteers devoted their talents, their time, their energy and their money to the task of rendering themselves capable of defending their native land. We wonder—the world wonders—at the enormous treasure which the Government of our country levies for the public service; but, to my mind, that apparently exhaustless wealth is by no means the richest offering poured into the National Exchequer. There is a voluntary taxation—a taxation of time,

of science, of energy—which pervades the whole municipal, judicial, political, and, I may now say, military life of England, through which the whole machinery of the State is linked together, and by which it works so harmoniously for national glory and freedom. We are all volunteers, we are but part of a grand army of men, who, loving their country, believing in its institutions, aiming at its ever-increasing happiness, are all doing our part to promote the common weal.”

It was at one of the small meetings of his mayoralty—and none were too small for his interest and advocacy—that he spoke to a limited number of working men on the great question of co-operation. However small the audience, however few the reporters, Henry Fowler still gave his best; and as the best can never wear out, his words are fresh and full of life to-day. To be great in anything, to have the power of being great, means that it is, and always will be, impossible to give less than one’s best. It is not the occasion, nor the office, nor the object, that can claim it, but simply because the great have nothing else to give. And in the study of my father’s life, as well as in the remembrance of his practices, I see how the greatness of his giving lay in the fact that he himself was great; and so, whether he was speaking to a small gathering of working men in the days of his youth, or to the House of Commons as a Secretary of State, he poured forth all the riches of his mind and spent himself to the utmost for the public good.

“I believe in co-operation and in the principles of co-operation,” he said in 1863. “The principle of co-operation is one which is not yet thoroughly understood; but I believe in that principle we have the true solution of the relative rights of capital and labour, which will develop in this country an amount of security to the capitalist and an amount of prosperity to working men never seen before. I contend,” he continued, coming down into close touch with his audience with that practical common sense which always underlay all his eloquence, “that the working man who has a wife and family has no right to do as he likes with his money. Having given such pledges to society, it is his bounden duty to make provision for them; and if a man’s only capital is his labour he is not justified in spending all his wages, but it is

his duty to save some portion of them, and put his savings out to interest to provide for the future of those who are dependent upon his exertions. The principle of co-operation is an element of social and moral progress, and I am of opinion that the day is coming when the nation will in every sense of the word be united—when the jealousies and differences which now divide the different classes of society will cease—and the happiness of one will be the happiness of all, and the progress of one will be the progress of all."

The year of Henry Fowler's mayoralty was a momentous one in the history of Wolverhampton, but we are looking at it rather as a momentous one in the life of the man himself. It was the first public office he held, who was to be essentially a public man, and he held it, as he did all his future offices, with both hands, and a whole-heartedness which could not fail but to command success. In fact, his whole public life seems mirrored in that typical year of service when he was but thirty-three years of age. Its true importance he gauged not by its value in the world's annals, where the Mayor of a local municipality is hardly written with a capital letter, but by the ideal of the work which it might accomplish and the forces which it ought to represent. Every detail pertaining to its possibilities he mastered and made use of, and threw into its projects untiring energy and persistence. The best test of the quality of his work in that position, and of the quality of the worker, is that out of it no tangible good could accrue to himself, no compensation could be received as a reward. It was the humbleness of that office compared to those others which he was one day called to fill, which proves that his best service was ever given to his country, as truly in the Council chamber as in the Cabinet, and with the same self-forgetfulness in a consuming passion for the perfection of the work itself which characterized him so signally as a public man.

CHAPTER V

1863—1873

IN WOLVERHAMPTON

“To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil;
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will.”

CHARLES WESLEY.

‘Honour and shame from no condition rise.
Act well your part; there all the honour lies.’

POPE.

IT has already been hinted at that my father's professional life opened with a disappointment so deep that I do not believe it was ever quite effaced. His aspirations and desires had been fixed from boyhood on going to the Bar; and when, owing to my grandfather's breakdown in health and comparatively early death, the means were not forthcoming which were required for the preliminaries of that profession, it was a bitter blow indeed; though, with characteristic unselfishness where the question of providing for those dependent on him was concerned, and with a dignified reticence about matters which lay so near his heart, Henry Fowler took up the lower branch of the profession with an earnestness of purpose and devotion to work which completely hid the wreckage of his hopes.

He was admitted a solicitor in 1852, and remained in London for two or three years. In 1855 he came to Wolverhampton and started his professional career, shortly afterwards becoming a partner of his wife's brother-in-law, Mr. Charles Corser.

It was in 1851 that Joseph Fowler died in the City Road Circuit in the same house in which John Wesley had died sixty years

before; and from that hour his son Henry seems to have taken upon his shoulders the burden, though as such he never regarded it, of the support of his mother and sister. There was never any grudging or of necessity about his open-handed giving, and his love for his own people rendered such giving a real delight. Once in after years his mother's old confidential servant remarked: "If the doctor ordered my mistress to eat sovereigns, Mr. Fowler would come directly and bring a bag full."

I remember, when she was quite an old lady, my grandmother's telling us that she had the best son in the whole world; and though that is a statement which many happy mothers have the right to make, and the joy to believe, there was an outside affirmation of its truth in her case which is sometimes lacking in others.

When my parents were first married they went to Summerfield—a house which old Mr. Thorneycroft had built in his garden for his first son-in-law, and which was in turn occupied by the three others. Ten years later my father built Woodthorne, three miles out in the country, which was his home until his death. He also built a house for his mother and sister next to Chapel House, the old home of the Thorneycrofts; and the two widow ladies, Mrs. Fowler and Mrs. Thorneycroft, lived side by side for many years, whom, as a child, my brother designated as his "cap-grandmamma" and his "bonnet-grandmamma"—my father's mother being wont to come and stay with us for weeks together in the house at Woodthorne, while my mother's mother used always to drive to see us, and therefore seemed in our youthful minds to be connected inseparably with a huge velvet bonnet.

For many years, during which Henry Fowler spent the days in business in Wolverhampton, he always lunched with his mother, and used to keep a strict eye upon her expenditure, not as is generally the case, with a view to economy, but with a view to her enjoying the luxuries which he loved to provide and which her frugal Scottish soul shrank from accepting. One great bone of contention was a carriage from the livery stables which her son wanted her to make continual use of, especially by taking country drives, and this she felt to be a most unnecessary extravagance. At

length he characteristically settled the matter by saying that he should pay for the carriage for so many afternoons each week, whether she used it or not, and so at last she ~~was~~ induced to indulge in the luxury.

From the year of his mayoralty until he went into Parliament seventeen years later, Henry Fowler devoted himself to his profession and to the general interests of the town, which he had determined in his own mind to represent. But he never really cared for his professional life, though he worked at it as a necessity, and because, to whatever plough he put his hand, he never looked back. Had he been a barrister this would have been different, and he would have felt his profession as congenial as the goal to which it might have led; but, as it was, he separated his cherished public life from that of the law, and lived the two side by side. As a matter of fact there were not sufficient prizes in his profession to attract and hold him. He felt that he had big wares and he wanted a large market.

His first actual political speech was made in 1861, in support of the candidature of Mr. Weguelin, when the late Member for Wolverhampton, Sir Richard Bethell, had been appointed Lord Chancellor. This early record gives many of the opinions on which his political life was subsequently built up. The advocacy of party government, and the necessity for loyal followers of their party rather than individual crankiness and a fanatical conscientiousness about every isolated question which the party as a whole alone could deal with. He often said in after years that the weakness of the Liberal party was the amount of individual opinion which would not conform to leadership, and the strength of the Conservative party was the loyalty of its members, who always voted as a block whatever their private opinions might be. He had heard a reference made to "Liberal Conservatives" — "he no more believed in a Liberal Conservative than he did in a white negro." But there came a time, at the beginning of the next century, when apparently the impossible had happened, when the Ethiopian had changed his skin, and Henry Fowler himself was an example of a "Conservative Liberal."

The main text, however, of his early, and most other speeches,

was the necessity for reform. He was a born reformer, and could never enjoy anything as it was if he could see, which he always could, any possibility of improvement. The reform of the franchise and the necessity for the ballot, he considered then the basis of all political progress, and though he was condemning the Tory extravagance of that date, his Imperialism, which was always an integral part of his Liberalism, whatever it might be of other people's, showed itself clearly from the first in such words as these: "We are determined, come weal or come woe, that this country shall occupy the present proud position that it holds among the nations of the earth."

On retiring from the mayoralty he announced his intention of moving to procure the grant of a Court of Quarter Sessions for the Borough of Wolverhampton, which would also involve provision for a Recorder, Clerk of the Peace, a Coroner, prison accommodation, house of correction and a building suitable for the holding of the Courts. At the end of two months from the date of the petition, and six from when it was first mooted, the matter had received the consideration of the authorities at the Home Office, and the consent of the Crown—an event which, it was said at the time, was almost unparalleled, showing that his petition had received immediate attention at the Home Office, the reason for which was made clear by the words of Mr. Weguelin, the Member for the borough: "To my excellent friend, Mr. Fowler, my thanks are specially due, for he it was who drew up the report which was submitted to the Home Office, and which I have authority for saying was so complete in all its details that it left the Parliamentary Representatives of the borough little to do in urging a speedy compliance with the desire of the town."

In 1864, when his brother-in-law, the late Colonel Thorneycroft, was High Sheriff of Staffordshire, a prophetic custom seems to have been inaugurated at all public functions that Henry Fowler should propose the toast of the House of Commons. And on that first occasion he did so with the enthusiasm which always lit up his love for that venerable House.

"The late Emperor Nicholas said he could understand a

despotism, and he could understand a democracy, but the thing called a constitutional Government was beyond his powers of comprehension. But we understand and appreciate it, and as a nation we are indebted to the House of Commons for the practical, successful working-out of constitutional government in such a manner as proved that no other form of Government has ever existed, nor does at the present moment exist, which so indissolubly links together the strictest obedience to law and the purest administration of justice with the most perfect and complete development of civil and religious freedom. Among the civilized nations of the earth, you will find many brilliant courts, many gallant soldiers, many brave sailors ; you will find many princely aristocracies ; but you will find that there is but one House of Commons, unique in the brilliant associations of its history ; unique in the statesmanship, talent and the patriotism of its long roll of illustrious Members ; unique in the lofty independence of its personal character ; unique in the purity, ability and success which have ever characterized the endless details of its varied functions. The House of Commons stands alone, at once the oldest, the noblest and the best of all representative assemblies, which are the symbols and the gauge of a nation's freedom and a nation's progress."

On Cobden's death in 1865, Henry Fowler paid him a last tribute framed by the motion of the Town Council, but worded by the living sympathy with true statecraft which never ceased to beat within his breast. " Profoundly as I reverence the character of the statesman, still I do not think his claims to the admiration and gratitude of his fellow-countrymen rest merely on grounds of party politics, but I venture to say that the verdict of the Senate, the verdict of the Press, the verdict of all England at large, has already settled at once and for ever the question that the claims of Richard Cobden to the respect and admiration of his fellow-subjects rest on higher grounds than any of those which are involved in mere party fights. I believe that so long as all classes and all interests in this country enjoy, as they now enjoy, the rich results which Mr. Cobden's victory has achieved for them, so long will Englishmen of all ranks and shades of political opinion

admire the distinguished purity and the disinterested patriotism and unflagging self-denying labour which placed that son of a Sussex yeoman among the foremost statesmen of Europe." He also referred to the interesting fact that shortly before his death Richard Cobden had written his autograph in a book which was to be sold for raising funds for the restoration of the Collegiate Church of Wolverhampton, and had added this short, characteristic note: "Free trade, the international law of the Almighty."

When President Lincoln was assassinated that same year, Henry Fowler's words left no uncertain note as to his attitude on the great question of the Slave Trade. He was chosen to preside at the meeting called for the expression of sympathy on account of his avowed partisanship of the Northern side. "Although I have the deepest and sincerest respect for those who hold contrary sentiments on this subject to myself, I do not shrink from avowing the unalloyed gratification with which I hailed the downfall, the utter destruction, of that monstrous attempt to rear an Empire for the conservation, the perpetuation, and the extension of human slavery. . . . The statesmen of the South fondly hoped that in this country Mammon reigned supreme, and that for cotton, we were prepared to barter away principles and policies which constitute our national glory. Themselves trained in and tainted by the atmosphere of slavery, they were unable to appreciate, and could not understand, that inherent love of freedom which, thank God, is the essential element of our national character. The working men of Lancashire, however, taught them a different lesson. I may be allowed to say by way of parenthesis that that lesson preaches to English statesmen as well as to Southern slave-holders; and when we hear, as we sometimes do, of the ignorance, prejudice and the incapacity of working men, I hope we shall in future also hear of the political knowledge, the magnanimous self-denial, the heroic sufferings of the Lancashire operatives in the dark and dreary winter of the cotton famine. . . .

"Now in the present quarrel Englishmen have said some hard things of the Americans, the Americans have said some hard

things of us, but, notwithstanding, there is at the bottom a deep feeling of union between the two, and every one who has the cause of freedom and progress at heart must wish to see these two great nations, whose existence and prosperity are the best guarantee for the cause of freedom, remain united, marching side by side in the van of civilization." Of Lincoln himself he pointed out how, "without a diplomatic training, he had fought his way up to a position almost unparalleled in the history of the world, and when he was gone not even his bitterest enemy could point his finger to one act that he did, after being placed in that position, which indicated a wish to prostitute the power placed in his hands for the gratification of personal vindictiveness or the promotion of his personal gain."

The next public enterprise that Henry Fowler undertook was the building of a Town Hall worthy of the increased municipal rights which had recently been attained, also through his instrumentality. "Some people," he said, "think nothing of the formalities of justice, but though I am a Radical in many things, I am not a Radical in that, for I think that the formalities connected with the administration of justice are of great importance, and that justice solemnly administered in a suitable place, and in a suitable manner, is more likely to repress crime than a slovenly and indifferent mode of procedure." "Utility and ugliness are not inseparable." And so he gradually swept away the opposition to the scheme, serving as chairman of the committee which undertook it; and in 1869 the foundation-stone of the present handsome and useful building was laid. Into its great hall the white marble statue of George Benjamin Thorneycroft, which was the work of his distant kinsman John Thorneycroft the sculptor, was subsequently moved from the cemetery, and so the first Mayor of Wolverhampton, under the town's banners, stands fitly there; while in the Council Chamber, many years later, was hung a full-length portrait of his son-in-law, Henry Fowler, the statesman, speaking in the House of Commons from the Front Bench, by Arthur Cope, the present R. A.

During the High Shrievalty of his uncle, Mr. John Hartley, he paid this tribute to the Judges at the Stafford Assizes:

"One sentiment in which we must all agree, and of which we are all proud, is the feeling with which we regard the independence, the impartiality, and the utility of the English Bench. . . . Money can do a great deal in this country, it can buy a good many things, but, thank God, there is one thing it cannot buy, and that is the services of an English Judge." He always possessed and expressed the greatest admiration for the Bench, and there lay in that feeling a least ambition which he ever mourned. He was one of the men who are naturally apt to think that the other side of the road is the best one for pedestrians, and so he doubtless exaggerated the aspirations which disappointment had destroyed, and never put his perspective quite right again. His sense of proportion was admirable, but he always lacked a sense of perspective, just as he lacked all the attributes which Art bestows upon her sons. Music he positively disliked, and was absolutely without ear for tune or harmony, yet it is strange what an ear for rhythm he had in speaking, and how an unconscious harmony enfolded his words. Pictures he could only look at, but never see. Poetry he rarely read; and though he loved nearly all printed matter, it was the story of a novel, not its setting, which appealed to him. In later days, when Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler—his elder daughter—began to write her novels, my father's advice was superbly useless, though he always had plenty of it to dispense. He was, of course, possessed by the parental fallacy that his children never grew up, and that therefore his corrective powers were essential for the success of any of her novels, though the exercise of those powers, if it had not reduced her to laughter, would have reduced her to tears. I remember a very nice instance of this in his revision of the MS. of *The Farringdons*. Elisabeth is pointing out Mrs. Paul Scaton—the former Isabel Carnaby—"She looks brilliant and a little hard," was Cecil Farquhar's comment.

" 'I don't think she is really hard, for she adores her husband, and devotes all her time and all her talents to helping him politically. He is a Postmaster-General, you know, and is bound to get still higher office some day.'

" 'Have they any children?'

“ ‘No. Only politics.’ ”

My father underlined the “No.” “I shouldn’t say that,” he explained gravely, “it is too conclusive. I should say ‘Not yet.’ ” And I don’t think he ever quite understood why we laughed so much. “I never like a closed door,” was one of his maxims, and he could not see why it could not be left ajar even in fiction.

His almost exhausting exhaustiveness rendered his statements and reports clear and convincing, but Art deals with impressions and suggestions, and he was ignorant of all her ways. I remember arguing in connection with a somewhat fictitious biography that the impressions it gave of the family were really truer than a bald statement of facts would have been, because it gave the spirit of the atmosphere of which that family was an embodiment, and therefore handed down to posterity a truer record of them than any number of printed diaries could have done. But he would return to his grand old principle “Never tamper with the truth,” and he could not understand why to paint a forest is not to draw and colour accurately so many dozen separate trees.

As the years rolled by, Henry Fowler began to take a more conspicuous part in the political life of the borough and neighbourhood. His general work for the good of the town was untiring. In addition to the building of the Town Hall, he took part, as a governor of the General Hospital, in the enlargement of its buildings. As a governor of the Grammar School he shared in its re-modelling and re-building, to fit it for the requirements of modern education. As a governor of the Orphanage, he helped in its extension, and showed unflagging interest in all these institutions. He was never absent from any public meeting of importance—of whatever type and kind. The British and Foreign Bible Society, the Wesleyan Improvement Society, the Sunday School Teachers’ Conference, the Agricultural Society, Home Missionary Meetings, and countless others, all benefited by his wisdom and eloquence, but not till about 1866 did he begin to identify himself more particularly with political life, and to take his stand under the policy of the Government Reform Bill for the

extension of the franchise. He spoke at a great meeting for the support of this, and in it alluded for the first time to his future chief, Mr. Gladstone.

"You have faith also in Earl Russell's illustrious colleague—a man whose unrivalled statesmanship, and whose unrivalled talents, have placed him on an eminence where he is unceasingly exposed to the bitter attacks of his opponents and the treacherous jealousy of his allies. Those who hate working men also hate Mr. Gladstone. There is no man who has done so much for the working classes as he has done. . . . If you want to see the arguments in favour of Mr. Gladstone's policy, go home—there you will find them, for there is hardly a meal you have where you do not partake of the benefits of that policy. There is one thing in particular for which you are indebted to Mr. Gladstone, and which has brought upon him more relentless hostility than anything he has done before, but which I regard as one of the most beneficial things which has occurred in recent years: I allude to the penny papers."

From this date my father's activities included every political question of the day. Though a Radical of those days, he yet held very strong opinions as to the evil of any one class of the community's swamping the others, and he said to a mass meeting of working men: "I believe a Parliament elected mainly by the landed interest would be a great evil; I believe a Parliament elected mainly by the capital interest would be a great calamity; and I do not shrink from saying, in the presence of this meeting, that a Parliament elected mainly by working men would also be a great calamity." He stated publicly that he was not in favour of manhood suffrage, and he quoted John Bright as being also against it. "What they wanted was an extension of political power for the intelligent, industrious, honest, sober artisans; but men not intelligent, industrious, honest, and sober were not entitled to have it."

On the 30th November, 1866, Queen Victoria came to Wolverhampton to unveil the statue of the Prince Consort by John Thornycroft, which had been erected in the market-place. As it was Her Majesty's first public appearance after the great sorrow through

which she had passed in the loss of her husband, peculiar interest was attached to this function throughout the whole country. Among the many officials who were presented to the Queen on this occasion was Henry Fowler, as seconder of the address, and he paid an eloquent tribute to the memory of the Prince Consort in his speech at the luncheon banquet : " I venture to assert that there is no branch of statesmanship, no department of Government—no development of science—no emblem of art—no inward movement for the material or moral welfare of the people as a whole, which cannot claim the teachings and the example of the great and good Prince Consort as a part of their inheritance. But without detracting from that assertion as a whole, I presume to think that the interests (and I use that word in its highest sense) which are predominant in the district of which Wolverhampton is the capital, are pre-eminently linked with the life and labours of that illustrious Prince. Drawing no invidious distinctions of class they specially represent the middle and the working classes. No man ever more accurately gauged the triumphs which the union of these classes has achieved. No man had a keener insight into the difficulties and dangers to which these two classes, both separately and unitedly, are exposed, and no man ever had a nobler faith in the beneficial results which the enlightened combination of educated capital and educated labour are destined to accomplish. Therefore, in this district and in this town, it is our duty and our delight to honour one who, promoting science by his judicious patronage, and art by his enlightened precepts, incited all men to all works of Christian duty by the force of his bright example. The pomp and pageantry of to-day will soon be a thing of the past. The brilliant circumstances which have characterized the inauguration will be toned, even in the most enthusiastic minds, by the mellowing influence of time ; but while Englishmen, to quote the Prince Consort's own words, are ' devoted to the noble work of fostering the arts of peace and endeavouring to give a wider scope to the blessings of freedom and civilization,' the memory of ' the silent father of our kings to be ' will have a monument more beautiful and more enduring than sculptor ever chiselled or artist ever drew."

In 1870 Henry Fowler became a candidate for the School Board, and was not only elected, but was appointed chairman. Mr. Kettle (afterwards Sir Rupert Kettle, a County Court Judge) said that he felt the Chairman of the first Education Board in Wolverhampton should be a man in the foremost ranks of society—a man of personal honour, of business habits, and of the strictest impartiality. In studying the Act of Parliament, he found many technical difficulties and much that was not understood by the public:—he, therefore, felt that the legal knowledge which Mr. Fowler possessed, in addition to his other qualifications, would enable him to deal with those technicalities and legal difficulties as they arose, and so much doubt and difficulty and public discussion would be avoided. •

My father immediately began a course of strenuous work for the School Board, and was always an enthusiastic advocate of Board and Council schools; and we have a record of his views as regards justice to the denominational side which will always apply to that much-vexed question. "We are bound to do justice to the denominationalism of the country. What has that system done? It has done the whole work of day-school education. The Churches of England have done for modern school education what the Church in the Middle Ages did for hospitals and the like; they did work devolving on others, and which, but for them, would have been left undone altogether. Therefore in dealing with this question we must do the Churches of England full justice, and remember that it is not the deists, nor the secularists, nor the atheists, nor the political economists who have done anything for the education of the people up to the present time; and we are bound to remember that men who have done nothing are not entitled to come forward and dictate how education should be carried on; we are bound to remember that it was the people who believed in the Bible and the Saviour who have done all that has been done up to the present time, and that if they had not done it, there would have been at the present moment millions of people who had grown up uneducated."

It is not always easy for the most intelligent public thoroughly to understand an Act of Parliament; but it would take, shall we

say, a very up-to-date Act of Parliament to be beyond the comprehension of Henry Fowler. The language of them was as his native tongue, and he could interpret their practical meaning into a simple clearness which any one could grasp. The School Board of Wolverhampton therefore never worked in the dark, and at the last meeting of it over which he presided in 1873, a request was made that a copy of their report should be sent into one of the largest towns in England where a School Board was being formed.

Immediately afterwards Henry Fowler suffered his first and only defeat in public life. To the amazement of every one, this most popular and efficient chairman was not returned in the School Board election. His defeat was due—as he was never tired of pointing out to over-confident workers in subsequent Parliamentary elections—not to the strength of his opponents, but to the over-confidence of his friends; and because many of his warmest supporters, feeling sure of his success, gave their votes to the weaker candidate of the same party; but, of course, it gave rise to misunderstanding and surprise outside those who knew the circumstances. For instance, the Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Fraser, wrote as follows :

“ Bishop’s Court, Manchester,

“ November 26th, 1873.

“ MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ I cannot resist writing a line to express the regret with which I see that some malignant influence or other—I know not whether it is personal or partisan—has driven you from your place on the Wolverhampton School Board, where (so far as my knowledge goes) you have done such signal service in a great cause. I regret it not so much on personal grounds—for you can well afford to be relieved of a heavy burden—as on public. I regret to see a large constituency refuse, I presume on some secondary motive, to grant a man, whose capacity in working a great experiment has been tested, the opportunity of still using the experience he has gained in the public service. These caprices of the popular

mind are, more than anything else, what fill me with apprehension for the future of England. Forgive me for intruding upon you with this expression of my feelings. I could not help giving it. With kind remembrances, I remain,

“Yours very truly,

“J. MANCHESTER.”

He never stood for the School Board again; and that Wolverhampton took the lesson to heart is proved by the steady majorities which were his at all Wolverhampton's future Parliamentary elections. This seems to have been a breaking-point with purely local life. His energies were finally directed into the channel of politics. He had striven to keep party politics out of the civic chamber—to identify himself with all the public life of the town outside the political arena; but at this period he evidently felt that his apprenticeship was served, and that the time had come to concentrate himself on the representation of the town he had so strenuously served.

CHAPTER VI

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

"The law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Human longings are perversely obstinate, and to the man whose mouth is watering for a peach it is of no use to offer the largest vegetable marrow."
—GEORGE ELIOT.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business ?
He shall stand before kings."

Proverbs of Solomon.

IT has been stated elsewhere—indeed, the fact runs through the warp and woof of my father's life—that his profession was not that branch of the Law which was most congenial to him. Amongst all his papers there is literally no material relating to his profession, and it was a subject which he never spoke of in his ordinary everyday life. He had a quarrel with fate that he could not go to the Bar, and this blighted his enthusiasm for the other branch of the profession. To undertake any work whatsoever, congenial or otherwise, was in Henry Fowler's case to master it and to do it well ; but there is a marked lack of that enthusiasm in this work, which was so apparent in all other departments, and a perpetual expansion, beyond the confines of a solicitor's office, into wider matters of business which claimed his powers and held his interest. As daily routine was so unfailing a factor in his scheme of life, and old associations so tenacious a bond, his offices in Darlington Street, Wolverhampton, became verily an annexe of his home, and in them he spent the main part of every day that he was not in London. His room there held far wider business

claims than the offices declared, and was peopled by all local interests bound up in his town, his constituency, and a vast number of friends and acquaintances, who sought his counsel and were guided by his wisdom outside the limited area of a mere lawyer's advice.

On leaving London, at twenty-five years of age, to begin his professional life in Wolverhampton, he received the following letter :

" LAW STUDENTS' DEBATING SOCIETY."

" 13, Gray's Inn Square,

June 30th, 1855.

" DEAR SIR,

" It affords me much pleasure to communicate the following resolution unanimously passed at the Meeting of the Society on Tuesday last.

" 'That the most cordial thanks of the Society be given to Mr. Fowler for his long and most able services as one of the Committee, and this meeting desires to express its great regret at the loss to the Society of Mr. Fowler's services.'

" I trust you will not consider it presumptuous when I state that there is not a member of the Society, whether old or young, but will regret your leaving us ; and I am sure in your future sphere, we all wish you the success in life that your honesty and ability deserve, and we doubt not but that you will become as brilliant an ornament in your profession as you always have been in the Society. Permit me to subscribe myself,

" My dear Sir,

" Yours very sincerely,

CHARLES MOSSOP,

" Secretary.

" Henry Hartley Fowler, Esq."

His first partner in Wolverhampton was his wife's brother-in-law Mr. Charles Corser, one of the old-fashioned type of lawyer

which has vanished away—a member of an old county family, a friend of all the other county families, and almost a kinsman of all their concerns. His second partner was Mr. F. T. Langley, and his third Mr. C. N. Wright. To both of the latter I am indebted for some details of his professional life.

“My intimate association with Lord Wolverhampton,” writes Mr. Langley, “began in the year 1874, when I became Managing Clerk to his then firm of Corser and Fowler, and one of my earliest recollections is a good indication of the universally kind and fair manner in which he always treated me during an association which lasted till the year 1908—thirty-four years. I asked for a salary somewhat larger than his firm was disposed to pay, when I came to them, just out of my articles, and I ultimately agreed to go at the smaller salary that they felt justified in offering. When I had been some two months in their employ, Mr. Fowler (as he was then) sent for me, and said that they had come to the conclusion that I was worth the salary that I had asked, and that I should have it as from the commencement of my engagement. There was, of course, no obligation upon him to make any alteration in the bargain which we had made.

“It was in 1879 that our first partnership was entered into, and we continued in partnership upon the most cordial terms, which were never broken by any disagreement or unpleasantness of any kind, till 1908, when on being raised to the peerage, and becoming Lord President of the Council, the partnership, which had been only a nominal one for many years, came finally to an end. Our arrangements were made for periods of seven years at a time, and, from the nature of his other duties, he necessarily, as time went on, became less and less concerned in the actual business of the firm, with the result that, when a fresh term's partnership had to be arranged, I always asked for a little more than I had had before, a request which he invariably granted without any attempt to beat me down or to haggle as to terms; and when some ten years before he ultimately retired, we were discussing a renewal, he voluntarily said to me that he thought that the business was now more mine than this; and that, therefore, he proposed that in the new partnership deed the provision, which had always found

a place in our arrangements, that an out-going or a deceased partner should receive a sum of money for goodwill, ought in fairness as far as he was concerned to be omitted, and it was omitted accordingly.

"These two instances have always seemed to me to show his absolute fairness, and his power of looking at matters from another person's point of view."

In July, 1908, he wrote to Mr. Langley :

"Duchy of Lancaster Office,

"July 13th, 1908.

"MY DEAR LANGLEY,

"Thanks for your letter of the 12th. I have accepted the Law Society's invitation for the 1st of October, and I think I should not alter my professional position until after that date—in fact, at the end of the Long Vacation. But the details of dates and notices can stand over until we both return.

"I most cordially reciprocate your kind allusions to our long and harmonious partnership. I have greatly valued your uniform personal and professional attachment to myself, and the courtesy, consideration and good feeling which you have so generously displayed towards me; and I hope we may both be spared for many years to be under the same roof and enjoy unbroken friendship.

"Sir Robert Perks, at a recent public dinner, referred to his twenty-five years of partnership with me as having been never broken by any difference, and I feel grateful that my two old partners can truthfully unite in the same memory.

"With my kindest regards to Mrs. Langley,

"I am, Yours very sincerely,

"WOLVERHAMPTON."

The routine of office work is so uneventful that it leaves no records worthy of repetition, except these evidences from those with whom he worked of my father's upright and kindly dealings

with all with whom circumstances brought him into contact, especially those who were bound to him by any tie. And from the few notes I have been able to collect of this department of his life, it is clearly shown how the simple and lowly-mindedness of the great were ever shown in his attitude towards those who were connected with the humbler aspects of his career. Though he was the first solicitor who attained Cabinet rank, though his whole profession was illumined by his distinctions, yet he was always the same in his Wolverhampton office ; and never asserted, or even remembered, the lustre his name bestowed not only upon the firm with which he was connected, but upon the whole profession. Indeed to his mind the " Henry Fowler " which was painted on the doors and deed-boxes of his first offices was the same name as that of the illustrious statesman ; it was the name of the man, and as a man he was always the same.

" I cannot forbear," writes Major Hay, a close friend and connection, " touching this personal note. I look upon him as the truest and most reliable friend I ever had ; and I have often said of him that he is one of the very few men I have known who was not spoiled by prosperity."

Certainly his life appeared wholly prosperous to the onlooker, but the reader of its inner workings will see how many disappointments there were to leaven the lump. So all lives differ in their outside and their inside aspects. I have heard him say that he had never known a man in political life in whose mouth at one time or other there was not the bitter taste of disappointment. Onlookers see the most of many games, but not that of politics.

During the time that Mr. Langley was articled to his firm, the Midland Bank, as it was then, was in what was supposed to be a very critical condition ; and an important meeting was held at Derby, which Henry Fowler attended, taking with him the young clerk to render any assistance that might be wanted. Mr. Langley says that he can remember nothing of the details, but these main facts remain. The meeting was a very stormy one, and it was popularly supposed at the time that it would end in a resolution to wind up the Bank, or, at any rate, in a strong censure's being passed upon the directors. " Towards the end of the meeting

Mr. Fowler addressed the shareholders, put the position before them, and explained to them so clearly the unwisdom of taking any steps that would injure and perhaps destroy the future of the Bank, that he completely turned the meeting round, and no adverse steps of any kind were taken. I remember people saying at the time," Mr. Langley adds, "that he had saved the Bank."

As an instance of his generous trust in those in whom he had confidence, among whom his partners in business were assuredly included, during the preliminaries of his first Parliamentary election in 1880, Mr. Arthur Wright, whom he had asked to be his election agent, died suddenly, and he at once asked Mr. Langley to take his place. He knew that his partner, though not an active politician, was not of his way of thinking, and many of his supporters strongly objected to his choosing someone as his agent who had the reputation of belonging to the other side, and it was suggested to him that it was a very dangerous proceeding to take. He, however, never swerved from his decision, his answer to those who objected being that as he knew Mr. Langley, so he trusted him, and was quite satisfied with the choice he had made. It was during this election campaign that his agent was struck more particularly by my father's attitude of extreme caution. "At his first election," he tells me, "Mr. Fowler was in some dread of the possibility of accusations of bribery being made against him, and he required me to be with him all day long—although I thought perhaps there was other work that should be done—so that, if any accusation was brought against him, he would have evidence at hand to refute it. This cautious attitude of his was, to my mind, responsible for the fact that during the whole of his career in all its branches, never did he get into any ambiguous position, nor was any suggestion ever made against his absolute integrity. What I am alluding to in this is the great readiness with which nowadays imputations are made against prominent men which are often totally untrue, a fate which Lord Wolverhampton, as I have said, was successful in always avoiding."

It has been noted more than once how my father continually quoted trite proverbial sayings, but I should be inclined to say that he practised their wisdom more even than preached it. To

be forearmed because he had been forewarned, and that by his own caution, was an integral part of his habit of mind. To be in time with the proverbial stitch saved him many a future nine. To look before he leaped into any situation—if his deliberate entry therein could possibly be described as a leap!—was an instinct as well as a planned course of action. All such were the texts upon which his life was the sermon. But of his caution, I would say that it grew so immense that having dominated for so long, and in some measure so unduly, all his active life, there came a time when it at last outgrew its strength; and though saving him from possible ills, it robbed him of certain good.

Mr. Langley's recollections also include my father's great dislike to, and even almost a hatred of, the introduction into politics of any personalities. "I well remember," he says, "a striking instance of this; on one occasion Mr. Fowler was going to speak in a contested election. As was generally the case when he was in Wolverhampton and at his office, we were having a friendly gossip about current events. He told me about his forthcoming visit, and said that he was rather suspicious that he might be asked to join in some personalities which were being somewhat largely indulged in at that particular election; and I well remember how he emphatically said: 'I will have nothing to do with these dirty personalities. I will attack the man's principles as much as they like, but I will never be a party to attacking any man personally!'"

The young partner in the firm, Mr. C. N. Wright, sends also a few descriptive notes of my father's everyday office life: "It was during the last twenty years or so of Lord Wolverhampton's life that I knew him at his office in Wolverhampton. Until he was raised to the peerage, he was a member of the firm, and took out a certificate to enable him to practise as a solicitor, but it was very seldom that he himself undertook any legal business. He used to say that he was out of touch with the everyday work of a solicitor, and he would leave the control of matters with his partners; but his interest in what was going on was keen and unflinching, and his advice was constantly asked by them and always readily given.

"When he was not in London he attended every day. His office

was a bright sunny room on the first floor, and except in summer-time he liked a good fire, and usually preferred to make it up himself from time to time. An offer to put coal on was nine times out of ten pleasantly, but firmly, declined. Every morning, soon after ten, he came in and found his letters and six or eight morning papers waiting for him, and these he looked through first thing. It did not take long, for he was a wonderfully quick reader, and before eleven he would put the papers on one side, reserving sometimes any special ones which he wished to study more closely, until later in the day. His correspondence was undertaken next, and he would dictate his letters to a shorthand clerk, preferring to use his private notepaper and usually sending down any letters on business notepaper for another partner to sign. After this was done callers would begin to arrive, and there were many who esteemed a chat with him as one of their most valued privileges. Local affairs, political organization, church matters, charitable schemes and personal and family business, all came under discussion; and although he did not always appear to the public gaze, he had a greater share in these matters than many knew of, and his counsel was constantly sought and always given.

"Then he would want to know about important matters of legal business which were being transacted in the office, and would discuss them with his partners and give them the benefit of his experience. It was, to a young man, an education in itself, to see how quickly he would get to the bottom of an intricate matter, waving aside all details and side issues until the kernel had been found and the position taken up by each party defined. Then the line along which a settlement could be arrived at would be indicated, and the line likely to be taken by the other side pointed out, and here his knowledge both of men and affairs would be especially displayed. Sitting in his chair at his desk, or standing with his back to the fire, Sir Henry could see further through a brick wall than most people who are actually engaged in business.

"A light lunch, which, until very late in life, was taken in his room, and perhaps a short walk if the day was fine, and then the afternoon would be given up to writing, to personal business, or

to the preparation of speeches, and soon after four o'clock his carriage would come to take him home

"A few days before he died I heard that his carriage was at the door and went out to speak to him." In reply to my inquiries he told me that he was much better, and hoped soon to be back at the office. He seemed delighted to hear that his room was prepared for him every day as usual, and said how pleased he should be when he could return to it."

It is not easy to gather up a comprehensive impression of such a man as Henry Fowler was, before he had stamped his name on his day and generation, before he had grown to his full stature—a head and shoulders above the average man. Yet it is, according to Mr. Augustine Birrell, "always the early parts of life that are the most valuable both to read and to preserve for the future use of the historian. After a man becomes a Cabinet Minister and a prominent figure in political society—his life becomes very much like that of any other similarly-situated individual." So the Cabinet Minister himself feels; but there are others than the historian in the public to cater for. I am reminded of a little strange lady, I forget from where—either a remote constituency or an American State—who called at our London house in the year 1895, and having closely scrutinized our drawing-room, she proffered this remarkable request: "And now, my dear Miss Fowler, please tell me something of the habits of Cabinet Ministers." It was indeed difficult to surmount the obvious temptation of describing my father as if he had been a camel or a kangaroo, and not to thrill her with fictitious, dramatic details. She was not an historian.

In the early days of his Wolverhampton life, before his "habits" became worthy of interest to one section of the community, but when they were in Mr. Birrell's opinion most worthy of note, my parents found life-long and most interesting friends in the quartette of sisters, the Misses Macdonald, who were subsequently known to the world as Lady Burne-Jones, Lady Poynter, Mrs. Kipling and Mrs. Alfred Baldwin. The last of whom sends me the following early recollections:

"When I first knew Lord Wolverhampton he was a young

man of little more than thirty years of age. Not many now remember him as Mr. Henry Fowler, when he and his wife were living in Wolverhampton in the early years of their happy marriage, and before his political life had begun.

"After so great a lapse of time my memory of him naturally cannot be a continuous one, but consists of isolated, vivid impressions fresh as though received yesterday. And it is the same with my recollections of Lady Wolverhampton, for whom I had the warmest affection and admiration. She, too, in a different way had as marked a personality as her husband and equally impressed my mind.

"The friendship between our families began when my father, the Rev. George Browne Macdonald, was Minister of the Wesleyan Chapel, then attended by Mr. and Mrs. Fowler. At that time our home life was completely overshadowed by the long illness of our father, and almost all the sunshine that came to my sisters and myself in those sad days, we owed to the affectionate kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Fowler. We were lively girls in our teens, full of interest in life and affairs, in books and politics, and the delightful evenings at Summerfield where we discussed all things in heaven and earth, and not without happy laughter, sent us home to refresh our parents with a recital of our exhilarating conversations with our host and hostess.

"I can recall Mr. Fowler's appearance at this time very clearly, his powerful and interesting face with deep-set, grey eyes, and firm and well-formed mouth and chin. His habitual expression was grave almost to melancholy. At times he looked as though he was weary of life or even bored by it. But all came right the moment he smiled. I remember in the enthusiasm of my youth mentally comparing the transformation wrought by his smile, to the effect of a sudden flood of sunshine illuminating a rugged cliff.

"In those days I considered him a man of moods, and when he was silent or preoccupied I regretted a lost opportunity of stimulating and enlightening talk. No one could be more charming in conversation, and he knew how to make use of a pleasant vein of raillery, and was endowed with a keen sense of humour. He had a beautiful voice, clear and penetrating, with great variety of

modulation and expression, and persuasive charm. The power of such a voice is invaluable in a public speaker.

“Mr. Fowler held his own opinions with tenacity, but he accorded to others the same liberty. His was, I think, a distinctly argumentative mind, and he heartily enjoyed a good-humoured mental conflict. He pleased us very much by his willingness to discuss a subject with us young girls, as though we were grown-up women, he never quenched us because of our youth. He could hold three of us at bay at once, in our spirited encounters. I remember lively discussions round the table in which Mr. and Mrs. Fowler, my sisters and I took active parts, the chorus of laughter, and in the midst of all Mrs. Fowler’s voice from behind the tea-urn saying in the most good-tempered tone: ‘Henry, I entirely disagree with you!’

“Mr. Fowler was in those days the leading spirit in connexion with the Wolverhampton Library, where we young people spent many a happy hour browsing among its store of books new or old. We were always glad when we happened to meet him there, and to have a book talk with him, however short. I remember vividly an afternoon when I was alone in one of the bays of the library vaguely seeking for something interesting or amusing to read. Presently I found myself wandering among the robust novelists of the eighteenth century, whose works I only knew by name. I was reaching down one old leather-bound volume after another, when Mr. Fowler’s approach was heralded by the sound of his unmistakable voice in conversation with the librarian. A minute later and he had come to where I was busy with my quest. After a friendly greeting he asked me what book I was looking at, and I showed it to him at once. He glanced at the title, and then told me in the kindest and frankest manner that it was not a book suitable for me; indeed entirely unsuitable, and that I had much better leave it unread. It was not a book for a young girl. All this was said so pleasantly, and yet with a certain earnestness that made it quite acceptable. I believed him, thanked him, and replaced the volume, where so far as I was concerned it resumed its dusty slumber on the shelf.

“My memories of Lady Wolverhampton are all happy ones.

She was absolutely unchanging in her affection. Time made no difference in the steady warmth of her kindness. After long absence she always met one again exactly at the point where we had parted. I cannot remember ever having heard her say anything that could give pain, and she was wonderfully discreet in all she said without giving one an uncomfortable sense of restraint in conversation. United with her warm heart and bright intelligence she had a true power of sympathy and in an unusual degree. While she wept with those that wept she possessed also perhaps the rarer gift of rejoicing with those that rejoiced. From my girlhood to the end of her life no joy and no sorrow came to me without the expression of her loving sympathy.

"When I heard of Lady Wolverhampton's death, though I have seldom seen her of late years, I realized that something precious had gone out of my life."

Another young friend of my parents, who was dearly loved almost as a daughter, was their niece, Mary Eleanor Corser, whose husband, Major Hay, holds memories, too, of these far-away days, and has impressions founded upon an intimacy with my parents, which began away back in the sixties

"The general impression which your father left upon my mind," writes Major Hay, "is that of a gracious influence working through a strong personality. He was a man of indomitable moral courage, but I had always considered him somewhat timid physically till I was travelling in Scotland with him and your mother; we were driving and there was an accident to the horses which might have been very serious, and I much admired his perfect coolness and self-possession."

What hidden treasures lie in every man's nature! Henry Fowler's moral courage many could comment upon, but this is the only illustration of there being any physical courage buried in his breast. The key to this secret chamber, as to all the regions of his character, was a claim—a crisis. He could always rise to an occasion, but without the occasion he sat still. He was never one of the men who had a creative work to do; who would rise, not because any occasion called, but because they had wings and must fly, careless as the birds of motive or direction. Henry

Fowler never flew—he stood up when there was something to do, and he did it.

“I always considered,” continues Major Hay, “that his hatred of cruelty was very pronounced and perhaps it carried him further than I could follow.” This allusion is to my father as a magistrate, Major Hay having been the Chief Constable of Wolverhampton at that time. And the stern soldier’s idea of discipline could not see cruelty in a penal strictness which Henry Fowler on the Bench never would enforce. Indeed he so disliked the imposition of any punishment that he rarely sat on the Bench, and “the severity of all sentences” was a theme on which he used to wax eloquent in denunciation. The only gleam of silver-lining to the cloud of his disappointment at not going to the Bar was the fact that, as a Judge, he might have had to condemn, though it was the Chancery Bar that his soul thirsted for, and to adjudicate there would have been meat and drink to him.

“During the few years immediately preceding his election to Parliament he took little part in the proceedings of the Watch Committee of Wolverhampton, and he never became an active Magistrate as far as the Police Courts were concerned; his influence, which was great, seems to me to have been exerted indirectly, and probably was all the more efficacious for that limitation.

“I have heard him speak many times, and contrasting him with other effective speakers I always considered that your father spoke primarily to the heart. There was a note running through his speeches which tended towards raising subjects higher than immediate self-interest. He certainly had wonderful tact and self-restraint. He was a thorough believer in Party government, and seemed to feel that personal predilections must sometimes be kept in subjection unless essential principles were involved.

“Many years ago, before my path in life was clearly marked, we discussed the Law as a profession, and I well remember the enthusiasm with which he would speak of the system of English Law. His admiration would be specially kindled when considering our Courts of Law as the safeguards of liberty, and he would urge that in them there was no wrong without its remedy.

"I remember discussing with him the difficulty of choosing a political party or principle. He recapitulated the many evils and oppressions which had been fought against in the past, and was of opinion that no such clear dividing-line existed between the parties as he considered there had formerly been. He thought that the redress of moral wrongs was no longer the heritage of one party. This was certainly anterior to 1886.

"He once, when I asked him if some compromise on the Home Rule Bill was not possible, drily remarked: 'Times never compromise, they only surrender.'"

In 1876 Henry Fowler joined Mr. (now Sir) Robert Perks in the establishing of a London firm, in addition to his Wolverhampton one, and there began his life-long friendship and intimacy with his new partner.

"The third time I saw Mr. Fowler," writes Sir Robert Perks (they had met previously twice at the house of Mr. Perks' father), "was in Wolverhampton in 1876. We met to arrange our law partnership, which lasted for twenty-five years. Concerning that happy and successful alliance, perhaps it is enough to say that it was one long period of unbroken friendship. We often differed in our judgment, but we were close friends all the time, and throughout that long stretch of years we never had one unpleasant word. No letters of complaint or recrimination were ever written. When business losses came, as they did more than once, not a word of blame was ever uttered. We built up a large law business and our house stood because it was not divided.

"The disposition to compromise, to which I have referred elsewhere, was quite apparent when Mr. Fowler and I went to choose our offices in London—for I may say that our law business was only in London. I had no professional connection with the Wolverhampton business. Two offices were offered to us. One was in a main thoroughfare, the other was in a side street, but half the rent. I wanted the main street! Fowler thought we should start in a more modest way. We compromised. We took the main street one, but arranged to sub-let part of our office to a Trade Association to which I undertook to act as secretary—an office which, needless to say, I soon had to vacate. Some

of the rules we made for the management of our London business were rather curious. We decided that we would never touch any criminal work : we would have nothing to do with Building Societies : we would take no County Court cases : we would avoid Divorce and Matrimonial disputes and last of all we would do no work for women , though I am not sure that my partner approved of this last condition. The policy of specializing upon railway and Parliamentary practice* which we pursued proved a wise one, for within four years of starting business we became the lawyers for the Metropolitan Railway and found our hands full of work in the Parliamentary Committee Rooms."

Henry Fowler's profession was so dominated by his desire for, and devotion to, public life* that it sinks into the shade as we look at his career as a whole. Even when his profession was apparently his main object in earlier years, he was gradually but surely becoming more and more immersed in public life. The public life of Methodism, the public life of Wolverhampton, the public life of politics, all drew him outside the interests of his office and claimed his growing powers. And from the time he went into Parliament in 1880 he practically lost all interest in the office work in Wolverhampton, and took little if any part in the conduct of business. There were, of course, certain matters about which his partners consulted him, and certain things which perhaps in a sense he did ; but after he became a Member of Parliament he never carried through any local business, and more and more, with great rapidity, he ceased to know what was going on or to be interested in it.

Possibly his interest was transferred more rapidly than otherwise it would have been because he happened to feel that he could trust his partner.

Of course he had the confidence of a great many commercial men in a very large way of business, and over and over again people have said how very much they valued the wise advice that he had given them on various matters. The fact that he was a sound lawyer and a good business man, combined with his great abilities, made his assistance very valuable to business men, both from the legal point of view and also from the general business

point of view. But he never was, nor wished to be, nor could have been, at home in a family-lawyer type of business.

He liked his professional life in London much the better of the two. The wide acreage of business gave him scope, and the kind of work he did there was more congenial to him. In later years the whole financial department was left in his hands, while his more ambitious and less cautious partner galloped over a broader area of business than could be attached to any such firm. And as time went on, the London office became a kind of meeting-ground and starting-point from which both its original partners stepped out day by day into their fuller life outside. Directorships in the Publishing House of Cassells, the Star Insurance and other Companies, the Chairmanship of the Kent Water Works, and subsequently that of the National Telephone Company, gave Henry Fowler business interests beyond his profession, and provided a compensating balance against the purely voluntary public work with which his life was packed.

For many years my father was a member of the Council of the Incorporated Law Society ; and in the year 1894, when he became Secretary of State for India, the following resolution of congratulation was passed by that Society : " Resolved unanimously, That the sincere congratulations of the Council on behalf of the Incorporated Law Society and of the Profession be tendered to the Right Honourable Henry Hartley Fowler, M.P., on his appointment to the high office of Secretary of State for India, which they believe is now held for the first time by a practising solicitor.

" The Council derive much gratification from the fact that a Member of the Council of this Society should by the exertion of his own energy and undoubted ability have attained a position of such eminence, and thus have acquired not only well-deserved honour for himself, but also for the Profession of which Mr. Fowler is a member.

" The Council earnestly hope that notwithstanding the arduous duties which the office he holds entail upon him, Mr. Fowler may still be able to give to this Society the benefit of his advice and assistance in matters affecting the interests of the Profession."

The Council also presented him with his portrait painted by Mr.

Arthur Cope, R.A., which, after being exhibited in the Royal Academy, was hung in the Great Central Hall of the Incorporated Law Society.

In 1901 his profession conferred upon him the highest honour which they held in their hands in appointing him President of the Incorporated Law Society, and during his presidency he delivered at their annual meeting at Oxford, on October 8th, 1901, the following address :

" As this is the first Annual Provincial Meeting of the Incorporated Law Society since the close of the nineteenth century, I think that I am justified in taking a wider range of legal history and legal affairs than the administration and legislation of a single year.

" The nineteenth century, remarkable as it has been for its discoveries in science, for its advance in civilization, and for the enormous improvement in the physical, social and moral condition of the people of the United Kingdom, is no less remarkable for its legislative history. During the century upwards of ten thousand, five hundred Acts of Parliament were passed ; and although many of them were only of a temporary character, yet the bulk of the laws by which we are now governed were enacted between 1800 and 1900. Of the sixteen octavo volumes which in the last edition of the Revised Statutes represent our legislation from 1200 to 1886, two volumes contain the existing laws enacted prior to 1800, and the remaining fourteen volumes contain the laws made between 1800 and 1886.

" I do not propose to survey or even enumerate this vast mass of legislation. I will only recall to your recollection the fact that this legislation comprises :

" Firstly, the great changes in the laws affecting real property, which embodied the reports of the Real Property Commission between 1829 and 1833 ; the laws affecting wills, settlements, land belonging to persons under disabilities, copyholds, leaseholds, commons, tithes, landlords and tenants, mortgages, titles, conveyances—in a word, the gradual abolition of the incidence of feudalism, which during many centuries had controlled the tenure, the title, the transfer, and the user of land.

"Secondly, the development of our commercial law, and of the laws affecting contracts, negotiable instruments, ships, and the dealings with personal property of all descriptions, bankruptcy, insolvency, and the relations of debtor and creditor.

"Thirdly, the Poor Law Act of 1834 and the subsequent statutes relating thereto, the great changes in local government effected by the reconstruction and reform of municipal corporations, and the two Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, which established county, district and parish councils

"Fourthly, the constitution and control of the police, the laws affecting public health, education, the workers in factories and mines, the protection of women and children, employers' liability and workmen's compensation for accidents.

"Fifthly, the incorporation and control of railway companies, the trading of joint stock companies with limited liability and their powers and obligations.

"Sixthly, the laws affecting religious disabilities, infants, lunatics, married women, marriage and divorce.

"Seventhly, the laws affecting the supervision and administration of the departments controlled by the Board of Trade, the creation and duties of the Local Government Board and of the Board of Agriculture.

"Eighthly, the changes in the administration of justice effected by the Procedure and Judicature Acts in the redress of civil wrongs, the enforcement of contracts and obligations, and the protection of rights both of person and property ; and

"Lastly, the great constitutional changes effected with reference to our electoral system, in the extension of the franchise, the provisions for secret voting, the prevention of bribery and intimidation, and the complete democratizing, in a word, of our Parliamentary representation.

"These changes record an aggregate of legislative achievements within the limit of a century, unparalleled, as I believe, in either ancient or modern jurisprudence.

"And while the first forty years of the nineteenth century may claim some share in that story of legislative progress, the chief distinction attaches to, and will in future history be regarded as

the especial glory of that illustrious reign which reduced our constitutional monarchy to a science, and associated with the efficient and pure administration of the law the greatest extent of individual freedom, and secured the effective influence of popular opinion in enacting and amending the legislation which national and personal interests required.

"I must, however, in addressing a legal audience, single out for special consideration some of those changes which have affected the administration and practice of the law. Wise laws, if they are to be obeyed, must be wisely enforced, and the administration of justice largely affects the belief in and loyalty to justice itself.

"It is in this review that we remember the labours of the great lawyers whose memories will always be associated with the law reforms of the nineteenth century: Romilly, Mackintosh, Brougham, Campbell, Denman, Sugden, Selborne and Cairns. They fought the battles, they achieved the victories, which rescued our administration of justice from the abuses, the delays, the evasions, and the cruelties by which it was fettered, disfigured, and disgraced.

"Our criminal law in the year 1800 was savage in its barbarity. In that year there were more than two hundred crimes punishable with death. Sir Samuel Romilly stated 'that there was no other country in the world where so many and so large a variety of offences were punishable by loss of life.' The crime of stealing from the person above the value of one shilling, of stealing in a shop to the value of five shillings, of stealing in a dwelling-house to the value of forty shillings, of stealing anything from a bleaching ground, of pretending to be a Greenwich pensioner, and other trifling offences, were capital crimes. During the century that awful category of offences which incurred the penalty of death has been reduced from two hundred to four—viz., high treason, murder, piracy with violence, and setting fire to the king's ships, dockyards, arsenals, naval and military stores.

"When Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837 her convict subjects were about fifty-three thousand. The convicts in prison in the United Kingdom on December 31, 1899, were three thousand

seven hundred and ten, of whom only two hundred and seventy were imprisoned for terms of twenty years and upwards. The population of the United Kingdom in 1837 was under twenty-seven millions, and in 1899 about forty millions. The Prisoners' Counsel Act, 1836, gave the prisoner the right to be properly defended by counsel. Up to 1897 about twenty-six acts were passed enabling accused persons in certain cases to give evidence ; but it was not until the ninety-eighth year of the century that all accused persons were enabled to give evidence in their own behalf.

" Our Courts of Equity and Common Law present changes and improvements as marked and as gratifying as those I have referred to in our criminal law. While the principles of equity which were administered by Lord Eldon and Sir William Grant (who in 1800 were the only two judges in Chancery) have not been very materially changed during the century, the modes by which these principles were applied to enforce undoubted rights and to redress intolerable wrongs were a disgrace to the law and to the courts which allowed them. A Chancery suit was regarded as a social civil war—a terrible calamity to be avoided like plague or pestilence.

" It was not uncommon for years to intervene between the setting-down of the cause for trial and the final judgment. Petitions filed in 1810 were not disposed of in 1825. In the year 1811 there were thirty-six causes ready for hearing before Lord Eldon, that had been set down for hearing in and before the year 1808 ; and at the same date there were appeals waiting to be heard by the House of Lords that had been set down for upwards of ten years.

" Lord St. Leonards' Act of 1852 effected substantial reforms in Chancery procedure, and prepared the way for the still greater reforms which have been carried out under the Judicature Acts.

" The great reform in the administration of civil justice, a reform which was resisted for half a century, was the creation of County Courts. In the year 1833 a Royal Commission recommended the establishment of a general system of local courts for the recovery of small debts ; but it was not until 1846 that the present system of County Courts—a most inappropriate and misleading title—was established. There are now upwards of five hundred of these

courts grouped into fifty-four circuits and served by fifty-four judges.

“ A serious question that arises in connection with the county court system is imprisonment for debt. The number of persons committed by County Court judges in the year 1899 was 7,864 ; in 1898, 7,803 , and in 1897, 7,727. The attention of Parliament has been frequently called, and will, I have no doubt, be called again to this widely-extended system of imprisonment for debt. Its modification, not to say its abolition, might no doubt, to some extent, affect the credit of the people, who would not be trusted if there was no power for imprisoning them for the non-payment of their debts. There are those who think that the reduction of the credit system would be a boon instead of an injury to the working man ; but it is an anomaly that the penalties of those who do not pay small debts should so strikingly contrast with the treatment of the insolvents of a greater magnitude, who not only evade the payment of their debts, but also the consequences which have been devised for preventing the wholesale defrauding.

“ County Courts have stood the test of half a century. Originally regarded as a debt-collecting agency, they have, by the extension of jurisdiction which Parliament has conferred upon them, emphatically become tribunals for bringing within the reach of the masses and to their very doors justice year by year. As vacancies have occurred on the County Court Bench, men of high standing, long experience, eminent and judicial ability have been appointed to be County Court judges.

“ In 1800 there was no special legal education for barrister or solicitor, and no examinations prior to their being admitted to the practice of their profession. Now no one can be called to the Bar or admitted as a solicitor without passing severe and testing examinations in both law and practice. There is still room for improvement in the legal education of law students of both branches of the profession.

“ While we congratulate ourselves upon what has been done in the past, we must not shut our eyes to the necessity of what must be done in the future in order to complete the reform of the administration of justice in this country. The ideal of a

perfect administration of justice is that the tribunal should be impartial and competent, that its procedure and decision should be speedy and final, and that this should be secured at the smallest possible expense to the suitor.

“The Judicature Acts have conferred great benefits on the suitor by improved procedure. I fear they have not accompanied that boon with any reduction in the costs of litigation. On the contrary, the cost of obtaining justice in the High Court is greater. While the suitor has a right to be exempted from all costs which are not absolutely necessary, the public have a right to demand that the large sums which are provided out of public taxation for the administration of justice should be carefully guarded, and that the judicial ability and experience which the nation happily possesses (and for which the nation pays a larger sum than is expended on any other judiciary) should not be wasted or misapplied. I have already given to you the statistics of *Nisi Prius* trials in the provinces, and of the lamentable waste of time—and that means waste of money—which they involve. I am satisfied that the overwhelming majority of the profession have come to the conclusion that, in the interests of efficiency as well as of economy, the circuit system should be completely and thoroughly reformed. In the days when the facilities of communication were limited, when there were few newspapers, and when the inhabitants of a locality rarely left their own immediate neighbourhood, and so constituted in themselves isolated communities, it might have been necessary for the effective administration of justice that twice in the year the representatives of the sovereign should be received in the chief towns of every county, and there bring home to the masses of the people the unity, the dignity, and power of that judicial system of which the sovereign is the head. But those days have passed away; what was appropriate and necessary in 1800 is an absurd anachronism in 1901. Do not let me be misunderstood. I am not in favour of centralizing the administration of justice in the metropolis. I see great advantages to the suitors and to the public in requiring that in the principal centres of population, and in suitable localities throughout the length and breadth of the land, both civil and criminal justice should be

periodically administered by judges of the highest standing ; and, holding that opinion, I am not an advocate for the sweeping away of the circuit system. That system can be preserved and strengthened and made more effective by a selection of suitable places where assizes should be periodically held, and by requiring, as far as practicable, the trial of local causes in the localities where the parties reside and where the dispute arises. Judicial time is far too valuable and too costly to be expended in trying petty larcenies and trumpery actions. A large number of the prisoners tried at the Assizes ought to be tried at Quarter Sessions, and all criminal justice administered at Quarter Sessions held for counties should have the advantage, which many counties already possess and which is compulsory in all boroughs, of the presiding judge being a trained lawyer.

" All are agreed that the long imprisonments which too often intervene between the committal for trial and the actual trial should be abbreviated. That can only be thoroughly secured by the more frequent sittings of the courts before whom those trials are held and by a wise grouping of counties, apportioning to each county in its turn the holding of the Assize. Much valuable judicial time would be saved by the simplification of the ceremony known as the ' opening of the Commission.'

" I venture to suggest that an essential part of any effective reform of our criminal procedure is the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal. The astounding and indefensible variety in the sentences which different criminal judges inflict for the same offences is a public scandal ; and although the interference of the Home Secretary modifies the severity which has been, and still is, a characteristic of our criminal justice, I think a surer and safer remedy would be the existence of a Court of Appeal, which would very soon practically establish the limits of punishment within which the judicial discretion would be beneficially exercised. No judge is entitled to allow any private or religious opinions of his own with respect to particular offences to influence the punishment which he awards on those who are guilty of such crimes.

" But the judges of the High Court not only try criminals ; they also try causes, and too frequently causes of the most trivial

description. Public opinion, whether professional or commercial, demands an extension of the jurisdiction of the County Courts. A Nasmyth hammer will crack a nut as thoroughly as it will weld molten steel; but the great manufacturers of armour plates do not utilize their steam-hammers for the cracking of nuts. That expensive amusement is the monopoly of statesmen and Parliaments. We want the separation in County Courts of what is merely debt-collecting from genuine litigation. The debts, although perhaps small in amounts, are of great importance to the parties involved.

"One word before I close with reference to the making of our laws. It has been for many years my privilege to take a share in legislation, and while, as a Member of Parliament, I resent (and that is not too strong a word to use) the sneers with which some Judges (both of superior and inferior Courts) criticize the drafting of Acts of Parliament, I am ready to admit that our present system is capable of improvement. Bills drawn by the eminent lawyers who are the permanent, impartial, and able servants of the Government for the time being are often marred and muddled by badly-drawn amendments adopted in a hurry by the Committees to whom such Bills are referred. I sometimes think that all Bills should, after they have passed the gauntlet of Parliamentary discussion, be referred back to the Official Parliamentary Counsel for their report as to the wording of such Bills after they have passed through Committee, and that an opportunity should be afforded of amending any errors of language, any confusion of meaning, or any conflict with existing law, to which the attention of Parliament would thus be drawn.

"We have made some progress in consolidation; that progress should be accelerated, and, as far as possible, the statutes affecting various branches of our legislation should be consolidated into one Act. Codification is a more difficult, but a not less necessary, reform in any ideal system of law. The experiments already made, such as the codification of the law affecting partnerships, bills of exchange, the sale of goods, are an encouragement to a more extensive following of the examples of the codes of antiquity, and of that greatest triumph of Napoleon, the Code which will

secure the immortality of his name when the story of his victories and his dynasty are the faded records of a forgotten past. That great lawyer and great judge, Lord Bowen, has well said :

“ ‘There is, and can be, no such thing as finality about the administration of the law. It changes ; it must change ; it ought to change with the broadening wants and requirements of a growing country and with a gradual illumination of the public conscience.’

“ Our duty as members of that great profession which, through evil report and good report, has rendered no small service to the administration of justice and the protection of those individual rights and individual liberties which are the elements, the foundations, of civil society, of law and order, of individual and national freedom—our duty is to do our utmost to preserve the traditions which we have inherited ; to remember the trust which has been entrusted to our care, to discharge that trust with unflinching integrity and unflagging industry ; to play our part in attacking injustice and wrong, in bettering the laws by which our country is governed, and in promoting the speedy and effective administration of impartial justice.

“ I ask you to-day, especially the younger members of this Society, to draw your inspiration for the law reforms of the twentieth century from the legal history of the nineteenth century.

“ Seventy years have passed since Lord Brougham, in the speech to which I have already referred, aroused the attention of the House of Commons while he detailed the defects, the abuses, the wrongs, the cruelties of the law and its administration. He closed that superb oration with a picture—I might say a prophecy—of the splendid future which he anticipated would be the glory of some distant age and some future monarch.

“ ‘It was’ (said Lord Brougham) ‘the boast of Augustus that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble. How much nobler will be the sovereign’s boast when he shall have to say that he found law dear and left it cheap ; found it a sealed book, left it a living letter ; found it the patrimony of the rich, left it the inheritance of the poor ; found it a

two-edged sword of craft and oppression, left it the staff of honesty and the shield of innocence !’

“The virtual realization of that noble ideal is not the least among the many memorable triumphs of the reign of Queen Victoria.”

At the end of his year of office it was further resolved unanimously : “That the Council desire to place on record their high appreciation of the admirable manner in which the Right Hon. Sir Henry Fowler, G.C.S.I., M.P., has discharged the duties of President, and their recognition of the great advantage to the whole profession, and especially to the Society, of the office of President having been filled by one in such a distinguished public position, and so generally esteemed and respected.”

So, as in all the departments of life with which he was connected, he brought distinction and honour to the profession to which he belonged, counting it ever more important what he could do for it, than what it could do for him.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL ELECTION, 1880

"How now, my masters! have you chose this man?
He has our voices, sir.
We pray the gods he may deserve your loves."

SHAKESPEARE

"Who if he rise to station of command
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire."

WORDSWORTH.

THE eve of the General Election of 1880 was filled with stirring activity in the greatly-increased borough of Wolverhampton. The number of its electors had risen to twenty-four thousand, and an association was formed called the Liberal Four Hundred, of which Henry Fowler was elected President. That system of organization was fiercely attacked by the local Conservatives, and it was a great joy to the new President that, when a Tory deputation waited upon Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury they were advised by their great leaders to work in a similar manner. "Lord Beaconsfield," said Henry Fowler, "was a great party leader, and a great tactician, and he knew, as a great party leader and a great tactician, that if the party was to win it must be organized. They must have officers, they must have a party policy, and they must have men at the head to direct them, because there was a great difference between a well-organized constituency and a disorganized rabble." He also urged that it was far better for a candidate to be chosen by the whole constituency than by a few leading members of the party, or for him to come forward by his own personal introduction, and that was the

way in which he himself was chosen as a candidate for the borough of Wolverhampton the following year. He had made an impressive speech at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, at a huge meeting held by Mr. Gladstone in 1878, and had attracted public attention to himself there—the whole Press of the country having expressed the hope that he would soon be heard as a speaker in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone, in a letter to my father many years later, referred to this speech and the effect it produced upon him. My father had been asked to stand for several other constituencies, but his mind was set upon representing Wolverhampton, and not even an earlier chance of getting into Parliament turned him from his purpose. The year before the General Election, a statue was erected in Wolverhampton to the Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers, on the completion of his fifty years' representation of that borough, and the speech which Henry Fowler made on the unveiling of the statue was as truly a prophecy of the town's future political history as it was a review of its past. The eulogy he pronounced upon the veteran representative was a foreshadowing of that which he himself, a quarter of a century later, also deserved, and the relationship between a constituency and its Member, which he declared to be the perfect one, was that which he himself maintained for so long. "It would be a poor compliment to Mr. Villiers, or to any Member of Parliament, to say that he is not a party man. I don't believe in those independent members who are not to be depended upon. True to his party, true to his leaders, true to his policy, he had yet combined with party allegiance such a faithful, such an impartial discharge of all those duties—and they are not the least of the duties of a Member of Parliament which lie outside the arena of party strife—that he had won, retained, and justified that public confidence, that unanimous respect, which the proceedings of to-day are intended to express and perpetuate. Wolverhampton is proud of such a man, and I venture to say that Mr. Villiers is, and ought to be, proud of such a constituency. At the second contest which took place in this borough, Wolverhampton sent Mr. Villiers, an inexperienced, untried, and then comparatively-speaking unknown politician, to take the seat for the first time

in the House of Commons. During the long succession of elections—I think eleven—that choice had never been regretted and never recalled. In the heat of the conflict, in the hour of the most brilliant triumph of his Parliamentary life, Wolverhampton renewed and repeated her confidence in the indomitable champion of Free Trade, who never sheathed the sword until the victory was final and complete; and when at length the talents, the experience, the cultured common sense, the political sagacity, the broad and enlightened statesmanship, which had for so many years been devoted to the public good were required in the higher services of the State, the borough gladly continued to the Minister of the Crown the same admiration and support which it had so freely accorded to the unofficial Member of Parliament. As Englishmen, we are all justly proud of the House of Commons as the oldest, and the noblest, and the best of those representative assemblies which are the symbols and the bulwarks of national freedom and national progress; the House of Commons, which reflects not merely the public opinions, but the tone, the sentiments, the patriotism of those by whom it is elected. Constituencies that are to be bought are sure to be sold. . . . Mr. Villiers can look Wolverhampton in the face, and Wolverhampton can look Mr. Villiers in the face, with a consciousness that no stain of corruption has ever dimmed the purity of the tie by which they are bound together. A free Member and a free choice, they point a bright and enduring example to those vast constituencies by which the destinies of this Empire are so materially controlled, and in future days, when that statue, standing in the centre of this great hive of industry, shall tell the story of honourable, brilliant, faithful, successful statesmanship, it will tell with tones equally distinguished, equally forceful, the story of an enlightened, trusting, patriotic constituency."

In these words he stated his ideals, and the story of his own Parliamentary life tells how he was true to, and practically realized, these ideals. It requires a good man to fulfil an ideal, but it requires a great one to make others do so. Yet Henry Fowler so taught, and trained, and trusted his constituency that it never fell from these noble aspirations. It learned to look for

great national service from its representative, rather than to expect him to be a hack for opening bazaars, or presiding at tea-meetings, or subscribing to football clubs. He scorned, and taught Wolverhampton to scorn, the Member who buys his popularity by ceaseless chattering to his constituents on every possible subject, and by feeding them with sugar plums, or amusing them with crackers. "I will do your work at Westminster," he would say, "and you know that a good workman sticks to his work, else he would never get it done; and once a year I will summon the electors together and give an account of my stewardship, and receive from them the withdrawal or the renewal of my trust." And this was his practice throughout his whole Parliamentary life.

I doubt if he opened half a dozen^e bazaars in five-and-twenty years. He was never at the beck and call of those who wanted to know his opinions on this or that. "If you keep calling a man from his work to ask how he is getting on with it, you will find he doesn't get on very fast." Nor had he any patience with what he called "spoiling" a constituency in any way. But on those great annual occasions when he rendered his account, his electors learned all that he had done, and why he had done it, and year after year they gave him a renewal of their confidence, and they gained from him, not only a fuller knowledge of practical politics, but an understanding of true statesmanship, which lifted them above their local interests into that higher patriotism which should be the crown of all political life.

Throughout the whole of his election campaign, Henry Fowler dealt with practical, rather than theoretical, politics. He stated his views strongly and straightly on the questions which would involve a speedy vote, but into the arena of the discussion of problems, which might never be presented to the populace, or, at any rate, not for a considerable period, he would not be drawn. An instance of this is given in a speech in which he refers to the disestablishment of the Church, which was being used by his opponents as a party cry. "I am not in theory in favour of Establishment. I hold the converse of Lord Eldon, who said that the Church was established not to make it political, but to make the State religious. I think history has gone the other

way, and if the question was now before the country whether you should establish a Church on the lines of the present Establishment, I, for one, should certainly say, 'No.' But the question of Disestablishment is not before the constituencies at the present time ; it is not a question of practical politics at the present day. If it were—I do not want to hide myself behind that—my answer is ' You cannot deal with an institution which has grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength for many centuries by an abstract question as to whether the thing is desirable or not. You ask me—am I in favour of the Disestablishment of the English Church ? I ask you—how do you propose to do it ? I can conceive a mode of disestablishment by which a powerful Church would be endowed with an enormous sum of money uncontrolled by the State, that would be a standing menace to the civil and religious liberties of the people ; and I say I would be opposed to such disestablishment. I can conceive of a mode of disestablishment which would deprive the Church of England of property to which she is as justly entitled as any other denominational Church is entitled to its private property, and, as an honest man, I would not consent to disestablishment on such a principle. The question is one which depends entirely upon the mode in which it is brought forward, the mode in which it is proposed to be carried out, before I could express an opinion one way or the other, and I certainly would take no mandate from you to vote either one way or the other. I do not mean to be pledged, and I do not ask you to be pledged by me, but I say this—that if any responsible Government, or any responsible Member of the Opposition, brings forward a measure dealing with so vast a question as the Disestablishment of the Church of England, and does not propose, as it ought to be proposed, that the constituencies should have an opportunity of distinctly pronouncing upon that measure when brought before them, I pledge myself to you that I would have no voice to speak for Wolverhampton on such an occasion, but that before I ventured to embody my opinion, whatever it might be, in action, I should resign my seat and come back to you and tell you candidly what I intended to do."

Other times, other' manners. The modern constituency is not allowed to judge of all measures carefully, comprehensively, one by one. Great questions and grave issues are now all jumbled together in the party bag, and to be in favour of one implies a compulsion to vote for all. My father was a great advocate of the principles of party government, but such a speech as the above shows how he also understood the importance of laying upon the constituencies the responsibility to which, by the nature of the constitution, they are rightfully entitled in the settlement of any great measure affecting the life and interest of the nation. He realized the sometimes forgotten truth that the Government is not only to rule, and to guide, but also to serve the people, and that therefore a rushed or crowded policy is not only a slight on the constituencies, but a dishonour to the ideal of representative government. The question of the Disestablishment of the Church of England is still, as when he spoke, outside the ring of practical politics, but have there not been other questions of grave importance, sorted out of a medley of measures, which the people had never studied or decided upon, when it would have been well if modern Members of Parliament had followed that good old-fashioned lead, and resigned their seats sooner than be false to, or ignorant of, the responsible opinions of the people whom they were bound in honour to fairly represent? The constituencies in these days are asked a dozen questions, and are only allowed one answer of "Yes" or "No." Not so did Henry Fowler treat the borough of Wolverhampton. Not so did the Governments of those days force the pace. Life moves faster now in every way, but in public opinion there is a speed limit still.

An account of the election day of 1880 is given very simply and characteristically by my mother in a letter to a cousin—the wife of an Irish landowner in Queen's County, dated April 8th, 1880.

"You will have seen by the papers that although there was a hard fight here, Henry won by a very large majority, 5,732. He had 12,000 promises and actually polled 11,606, which is considered exceptionally good. The poll was publicly declared at 11 p.m. in the open square in front of the Town Hall. The

receptions and orations which greeted Henry from the assembled thousands have been quite overwhelming. His most trying ordeal was a torchlight procession of 20,000 people of two miles' length, cheering like the sound of the sea. He did by entreaty save himself from the horses being taken out of the carriage and his being drawn by the populace. He made thirty speeches during the election campaign, avoiding and deprecating all personalities. The worst said of him was that his manner was haughty, and he bought all his things in London (which we don't). I was so thankful it all passed off quietly, it would greatly have distressed me had anyone been hurt. Mr. Hickman, his opponent, told him that he had vanquished his foes by his courtesy even more than by his power. It is pleasant to feel now the battle is over there are no scars left behind. It was one of the longest days I can remember. I could not see Henry from 9 a.m. till 12 p.m. I went up to the town to hear, at 8 p.m., that his prospects were excellent, but did not hear the final result until 11 p.m. When we got home after midnight, children, friends and servants all waited in the hall and gave Henry the heartiest cheers. It was a most exciting day, for there had been so much talk of a Conservative reaction, I did not venture to assume the result. Louisa was here; she was so diverted, I was glad to have her for her own sake, as well as mine." (Alluding to the death of my grandmother, barely two months before.) "Nellie and I went with Henry to the meeting for the county candidates. It was Henry's first appearance after the election, and his reception was really beyond description. Although by this time one has learnt to see the things of earth more in their true and real proportion, I do feel it a great pleasure that Henry has been chosen to represent my native place in Parliament, and that never having forced one step to this event, we have the comfort of believing he is in his Providential path."

My father's sister Louisa, to whom this letter refers, was the widow of the Rev. William Tyack, a Wesleyan minister, and the stepmother of seven children. The three daughters were her devoted nurses through a long illness. After my sister and I were married, they spent a great deal of time with our parents, and

rendered to them a similarly devoted service. My aunt was a most ardent Methodist, and she possessed to perfection that Non-conformist sense of humour which is rarely to be found within the Established Church. She avowed that she could detect one drop of Methodist blood, even as far back as the third generation, and her ready wit and racy tongue made her ever, even during years of suffering, one of the most exhilarating and delightful of companions. She maintained the quaint familiarity with the Divine, which was a distinguishing feature of the early Methodists, and her lack of conventional reverence was a sign of her absolute daily touch with religion in everything secular, her sense of humour included.

On the election day of 1880 I remember she practised the old-world custom of trial by text (opening her Bible at random and placing her finger on a page). The text on which she alighted that morning was the singularly appropriate one: "He delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many with me." And she firmly believed this was an omen of her brother's success that day.

The General Election of 1880 was, as many will remember, fought chiefly on the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Government, which had been in power for five years. When Mr. Disraeli took office in 1874 it was on the avowed declaration that "the country required a little more energy in regard to its foreign policy and a little less energy in regard to its home policy;" and to this maxim and all that it involved, Henry Fowler proclaimed his direct opposition. "Even if that policy had been carried out with success," he vehemently declared, "I should still disown and dispute it. You see in that declaration the principle which divides the two great parties in this country, and the question you will have to decide at this election is this: Do you prefer to engage in foreign politics, or do you prefer to engage in home politics? My conscience is quite clear on that point. I think we have advanced a great deal too much abroad and too little at home. A 'spirited foreign policy,' which is the conventional phrase adopted by the present Government, means war; it means territorial aggrandisement, Imperial development, with

a depressed trade and increased taxation. A spirited foreign policy is a luxury, and, like all other luxuries, you have got to pay for it. I hold that the greatest interest of—I was going to say a commercial nation—but of any nation, is peace. I hold war, unless it is an absolute, unavoidable necessity, to be a gigantic crime."

The policy of the Government with regard to the Eastern question at that period he described and denounced thus: "In 1875 there broke out in South-eastern Europe one of the most righteous insurrections against unrighteous rule that the history of Europe records. The insurrection was put down more or less. The relations of Europe were disturbed, and in the winter of 1875, the united Powers of Europe addressed a memorandum to the Turkish Sultan, protesting against the conduct of the Government in the past, and indicating what reforms were necessary in order to preserve his empire and restore peace to Europe. That recommendation was treated with characteristic scorn. Nothing was done. The great Powers—France, Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy—were desirous of addressing a memorandum to Turkey, indicating that coercive measures would be adopted, if necessary, to prevent the spread of the evil. England refused to sign that. The project fell through, and another insurrection broke out, which was put down amid circumstances of unparalleled cruelty. Again a Conference of the great Powers was summoned in the winter of 1876, and England's voice was again uncertain—again in sympathy with the Turk. Again negotiations broke down and a war broke out. . . . I find fault with the Treaty of Berlin on two grounds—first that it did not resist the aggrandisement of Russia, and secondly that it has provided no possible means for reforming Turkey. . . . If England had lifted up her voice on behalf of oppressed nationalities and of persecuted Christian subjects; if we had got rid of all that terrible mistake of upholding the dark despotism of the Turkish Empire; if we had established in South-eastern Europe a State like Belgium, whose independence and freedom would have been guaranteed by all the great Powers of Europe, then you would have recommended a secure barrier against Russian aggression, and you would have set up an example of constitutional government in that portion of Europe, the value

of which would have been inestimable and widely spread. I simply find fault with the settlement which the Government has achieved by the Treaty of Berlin, as having failed to resist Russia, and as having failed in reforming Turkey. We have also had," he went on to say, "a campaign which has involved the usual amount of suffering and death in North-West India. Our Premier told us that we must have a scientific frontier. Someone has said that the earliest example we read of the desire of having a scientific frontier was Ahab with reference to Naboth's vineyard. At all events we desired a frontier and we have taken it. We have undertaken responsibilities with reference to the hill tribes which will involve India in a very considerable and unnecessary expenditure, and we eventually won over the Amir to our views by that most potent of all weapons of Eastern warfare—gold, and he has retired from the contest with a pension of sixty thousand pounds a year." And then he referred to what he spoke of as "another and a sadder scene—a chapter in our history which I think already most Englishmen read with shame, and which I think when calmer moments shall arrive, when all political partisanship will have passed away, will be regarded with universal disapprobation;—I mean the unfortunate business in South Africa. . . . I am not prepared to go now into all the details of that question, but I will simply lay down one maxim with reference to it, which appears to me to be a sound one, and which certainly will guide me in my Parliamentary life—that whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right. Unless I am utterly and hopelessly ignorant of the great principles of morality it appears to me that our proceedings in South Africa have been from the first morally wrong. . . . The Zulu chief had not attacked us, he had not shed one drop of English blood; he had not taken one ounce of English goods, and we proceeded to invade his territory. A great Christian and enlightened nation went on this mission of extending the Gospel among the South African tribes with these weapons of warfare and slaughter."

Though Henry Fowler never descended to the claptrap of blaming Governments for adverse circumstances over which they had no control—for depressed trade and decreased demand and

therefore decreased supply ; for bad harvests and bad weather ; yet he put his finger on those points which the policy of Governments can directly deal with, and he brought home to his electors the dangers of that " spirited foreign policy " which he so strongly denounced. But his political aspirations were for something more than staying evil, they were for promoting good. To criticize and cavil at anything is at best a poor performance, and one with which Henry Fowler was never satisfied. He had a mind full of resource, full of counter-acting policy, and practical plans for carrying it out. He deplored the foreign policy of Mr. Disraeli, and he brought before the people the home policy by which Mr. Gladstone had endeared himself so truly to the hearts of the great working and middle classes of this country. He recalled that golden season of peace and prosperity when Mr. Gladstone's finance brought the income tax down to threepence in the pound, and yet there was enough and to spare for the national expenditure ; when there was peace throughout the world, yet our army and navy were adequately maintained out of the year's income. The disestablishment of the Church in Ireland had been fairly carried out—a great measure with regard to Irish land, an Elementary Education Act and the Ballot Act had all been passed ; purchase in the Army abolished, and the Universities thrown open to Dissenters, by the last Liberal Government, and he looked forward to still greater achievements by the next. He advocated an extended home policy. " The happiness and progress of our home population is of vastly more importance to us than any foreign policy, than any extended empire. You may call it a parochial policy—call it what you like ; I am myself a partisan of such a policy."

He expressed himself in favour of the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer, and a supporter of local option, the Burials Bill, a reform of the Bankruptcy Laws, and a modification of the laws relating to the tenure, transfer and descent of land.

The principal Conservative in Wolverhampton at that time, and Chairman of the Conservative Association, was the late Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft, of Tettenhall Towers, the brother of Henry

Fowler's wife. He had repeatedly been asked to stand for Parliament, and Lord Beaconsfield asked him, as a personal favour, to do so for the county; once he was actually nominated as a candidate during his absence from home; but he always resolutely declined to stand for Parliament, though he gave great support to the Conservative party in the town and county. But when Henry Fowler was selected as the Liberal candidate, his brother-in-law withdrew from any active opposition, and announced his intention of taking no part in the conflict. When Mr. Hickman was subsequently adopted as the Conservative candidate, my father wrote the following letter to Colonel Thorneycroft:

"MY DEAR TOM,

"I greatly appreciate your kindness in having abstained from the public encouragement of an opposition to my candidature for the borough, and I heartily thank you for it. But now that, irrespective of your influence, and probably without your approval, a contest has been decided upon, the time has arrived when I must ask you to take your true position as one of the leaders of the Conservative party. I accede to your political opinions the same respect I claim for my own, and I could not, and I would not, ask you to sacrifice your conscientious convictions out of any personal regard to myself. Our friendship, which has been unbroken for nearly a quarter of a century, will not be in any way interfered with by your loyal discharge of your public duty, and I say what I mean when I ask you in justice to myself as well as in justice to yourself, to exercise your legitimate influence in favour of the political party with which, both by birth and convictions, you have been so long and so honourably associated.

"I am, my dear Tom, yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

His relations with his opponent, afterwards Sir Alfred Hickman, Bart., were such as favoured the foundations of a life-long friendship. There was no taint of personalities on either side, no debasing

of the fair political fight by the introduction of petty and unworthy squabbles. The keynote which my father struck at the beginning of the campaign was, that the question before the electorate was not a question of men, but of measures. "We are part of the great constituency of this great Kingdom, called upon, at a national crisis of unparalleled importance, to pronounce the verdict which involves either weal or woe to ourselves and to our children, and I ask you as men—as Englishmen—to rise to the dignity of the occasion, and whether you be Liberals or Tories, uphold your opinions like men—stand manfully for them—be fair to your opponents, and go openly and quietly to the poll there to record your verdict." An atmosphere suffused by such a spirit as this was bound to keep clear and clean. The unwise and cheap advocacy or antagonism of local supporters fell like leaves shrivelled at the touch of frost. My father was sometimes a hard fighter, but he was always a fair one; and during the many years that he and Sir Alfred Hickman stood side by side in the representation of different portions of the borough, a division of which followed this first election, they always stood as friends. The service and interests of Wolverhampton were dear to them both; they had a common love for, and loyalty to, the town they both at one time represented, and it was a real regret to my father when, in the reactionary flood of 1906, Sir Alfred was swept out of his seat and out of active political life. The fires of these many conflicts had burned low, but the friendship which sprang out of them burned bright with advancing years; and when Sir Alfred Hickman died in the spring of 1910, my father mourned, not only a great benefactor of the town, but also a true personal friend.

He received the following letter from James Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, on his return to Parliament :

"April 6th, 1880.

"MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

"I must write you a hasty line—I have been intending to do so for some days, to congratulate you on your triumphant success at Wolverhampton. Yours was one of the most signal among the many evidences that the country

is awakening from its delirious dream, and has had enough of Lord Beaconsfield's Imperial policy. I do hope that a truer period of peace and honour is in store for us, and that you will have the satisfaction of contributing to its inauguration. With every good wish,

"Believe me to be,

"Yours sincerely,

"J. MANCHESTER."

In the midst, however, of congratulations and the glow of success, my father mourned very truly the loss of his greatest political friend in Wolverhampton—the late Mr. Arthur Wright, who had proposed him as a Parliamentary candidate to the Liberal Four Hundred, and had always taken the greatest interest in his political prospects. He died very suddenly just before the actual contest, and after the election his widow received the following letter :

"Woodthorne, Wolverhampton.

"Easter Monday, 1880.

"DEAR MRS. WRIGHT,

"My sister would explain to you that the report of Mr. Graham's remarks conveyed an inaccurate impression.

"I need hardly tell you how keenly I feel the loss of your dear husband at this crisis—no one can or does supply his place. I frequently think of him and what he would have said and done had he been with us, but somehow or other I feel that he knows all that is going on, and that even now (I say it reverently) I have his sympathy.

"My loss is of course a trifle in the sight of yours, but I could not help dropping you a line to say that my saddest thought in connexion with this contest is that he is not by my side.

"The only meeting at which I have broken down was when I went to address his workmen.

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

It was one of my father's strongest characteristics that he never forgot a kindness done, and his gratitude would haunt a whole family when one of them had deserved it at his hands. This was specially noticeable in the deep interest he always took in the family of Mr. Arthur Wright, whose widow sends me the following reminiscences :

"To me he was the best friend I ever had. My husband died in October, 1879, after three days' illness. Your father waited till a later train for his letters—knowing that he was ill. Hearing nothing, he went to London, only to receive a telegram saying that Arthur had passed away, and he immediately returned home. On Wednesday morning he came to Earlswood to see once more his friend. He would not let me be told till afterwards when he came in to see me. It was then I knew what manner of man he was—the great, large, human heart mourning the loss of his friend. It comforted me as nothing else could have done, and I remember now some of his words, and always shall remember them. A few days after your mother called with her strong, wise words of sympathy. Before she left she said : ' My husband wishes me to tell you that if at any time he can do anything for you (not professionally) he will always be glad to do it.' That promise was kept during thirty years, and he never let me feel that my affairs were a burden, even during his more strenuous years. ' You will always find me here at eleven o'clock on such and such days,—I can always see you if only for a short time.' When I went, there was the smile of welcome, the poke to the fire, the pushing back of the papers. ' Well, and what did you want to see me about this morning ? ' I stated the case as well as I could and he listened and understood. Then came two or three straight questions, which seemed to go to the root of the matter, and I answered simply, truthfully, in few words ;—then came those words of far-seeing wisdom and counsel which made all things plain, or which at any rate made my duty plain, and I came away feeling that life was possible and God was good. In 1888 I asked him whether he would allow me to article my youngest son to him—and he at once said that he would be glad to have him for his father's sake, and added : ' I think you will be wise to send him to us, for if

he has ability he is sure of earning a living when he has passed his final. I never cost anyone a penny from the day I was qualified.' The pride in his tone and the energy with which he spoke showed me how much that had meant to him in those early years.

"Another proof of the interest he took in our whole family was his wish to interview a young nephew of mine who was about to join the Constabulary in South Africa. I took him to see Sir Henry, who looked at him and asked a few questions, and then said 'Have you a good map of the country, and a history?' On Ned's replying in the negative, 'Well, get one, and study it. Don't appear ignorant of simple matters concerning the country to the first person you meet there. I should advise you to be a teetotaller; drink ruins more young men abroad than anything else. Seek out those belonging to your Church and join them if possible. If at any time you are in difficulty, consult one of the officers in charge of you—you may not think they know any more than you do, but they do—and follow his advice.' The boy was touched by the interest Sir Henry showed in him, and loyally followed his counsel to his own credit and our comfort. Again when my daughter had the offer of buying a house for the formation of her increasing school we repaired to him for advice. He heard all she had to say, asked questions, and then said: 'If you do not advance, you will go back. I think you would be justified in buying the property, but I should like to see over it myself. Perhaps your brother will take me over it on my way home to-day.' When my son had a long illness sixteen years ago, I received the kindest letter from Sir Henry saying that he knew there were many expenses when surgeons and nurses were about and would I accept the enclosed cheque. And I did not hesitate to accept it any more than I should have done from my father.

"I know also that when a young man, who had been articled to the firm, died, Sir Henry, unsolicited, returned half the fee that had been paid. All his service and kindnesses were rendered with such simplicity and goodwill and there was such an absence of ostentation and parade in his life. and such a faithful love of

home and friends, that his character seemed to grow in strength and beauty as the years passed. My own health having failed in 1905, I saw little of Lord Wolverhampton during his later years—but there are some things one cannot lose—one of them is the incentive of such a great example, and the other the sweet remembrance of so generous a friendship. I might add that my first remembrance of Mr. Fowler was meeting him walking one day in Wolverhampton in the year 1864. I knew him slightly, and as he raised his hat and smiled I was so startled at the change wrought in his face by that smile that I turned round to be quite sure that I had made no mistake in his identity. I got to know and love that wonderful lighting-up of his whole features, like the sunshine clearing the clouds from a landscape on an April day. Strange to say it is my last memory also of him, for the last time I was at Woodthorne to tea, in the year 1910, he was telling me how awkward the loss of his two secretaries had been to him, and of the unlooked-for early departure of the one to South Africa. ‘Lord —— said to me that he should not have let him go until he had cleared up his work for me, and if he lost the appointment that was nothing to do with me.’ Then broke out that illuminating smile as he added: ‘I replied that I could not now go back on the principles by which my life had been guided, and the Old Book said: *As ye would that men should do to you do ye also unto them.*’”

CHAPTER VIII

1880—1881

FIRST SESSION IN PARLIAMENT

"The gentleman is learn'd and a most rare speaker."—SHAKESPEARE

"Rich in saving common sense."—TENNYSON.

FROM the day of Henry Fowler's entering Parliament it was clear that his foot was upon the first rung of a ladder which would reach high. Progress was the text of his teaching, his personal practice was the embodiment of that principle. He never stood still, and he never went back. It is surprising to see how absolutely consistent were his teaching and his practice throughout the whole of his life; how he never went back even upon his words; how the opinions of his early days stood the changes and chances of the years and were still the same. Many a statesman's life will tell the story of different views, of diverse attitudes, and even directly contrary policies. But not so Henry Fowler's. He began life as a Liberal and a Methodist. He ended it as both. The same note rings through all his speeches—the same direction drew all his footsteps. Continuity of purpose, consistency of preaching and practice, stamp every page of his life's history, and it is impossible to find a single contradiction therein. I never knew a man who was always so exactly like himself, and whose attitude on every question could be more accurately foretold. His absolute stability was indeed a sure strength.

My father made his maiden speech in the House of Commons on an Irish Bill for compensating an evicted tenant on certain conditions if the landlord turned him out of his holding, and the

Press was unanimous in their praise both of the matter and manner of this speech

"Mr. Fowler's maiden speech," wrote the *Daily Telegraph*, "was, from the Parliamentary point of view, one of the best of the present session. He promises to become a useful, as he is already an accomplished, debater, and the Liberal chiefs will probably not lose sight of their new ally." A still greater success was achieved by the new debater in his defence of the Government's reform of the Game Laws, in which they tried to regulate the question of ground game as between landlord and tenant, and to allow the occupier as well as the owner the right of destruction. The opposition to the Bill was based on its interference with freedom of contract, and the fetich seems to have frightened even its supporters into a more or less listless defence; but Henry Fowler, with his usual prompt grasp of a whole situation, sprang up and stripped this bogey of its influence. "Men who ought to know better, and do know better, have charged the present Government with interfering with freedom of contract, as if such interference were not in entire harmony with all legislation for the last fifty years. . . . An Englishman cannot do what he likes with his own. His freedom in regard to contract is controlled both by common law and courts of equity, when the contract is opposed to public policy or where the contracting parties do not stand on perfectly equal terms." He backed up his statements with practical instances, but the kernel of his speech, which was so characteristic of the man himself, as well as so typical of his style of speaking, lay in that terse clear statement that a man cannot do what he likes with his own. His money, his talents, his service, his powers, were all stamped with the mark of duty—a higher claim than that of his own inclinations or profit. He ought to—and with Henry Fowler the word "ought" was one with the word "must"—do with his own that which is required by God and by his fellows, and so leave behind him not so much the record of how well he had done for himself in life, but rather the history of how much better his world, be it a small or a large one, has been for the fact of his having lived in it. And though now the Hares and Rabbits Bill, as it was called, is of little note, and

worthy of still less notice, the weapons which its champion wielded in its defence are significant because they were the weapons of a sense of justice and a law of righteousness with which he fought every battle of his life.

The great mark, however, which Henry Fowler made upon the Session of 1880 was in connection with the Burials Bill, when he delivered one of his most noted speeches. The subject was one which had a special interest for him as a Nonconformist, but it was on a wider than any personal ground that he strove to secure what in his belief was a righteous judgment. He believed that to remove a cause of injustice and friction which was bound to arise in every country parish where there was no burial-ground except the churchyard, would be as great a boon to the clergyman as to the dissenter, and afterwards he was told by many country clergymen how thankful they were to be relieved from the painful duty of bringing discord and added distress round the death-bed, and from introducing a spirit of controversy into the uncongenial atmosphere of a house of mourning. With his quick insight into the very pith of the question he strikingly illustrated his arguments by the potent suggestion that no one would dare to declare that such men and women as Joseph John Gurney and Elizabeth Fry should in their burial be classed with notorious criminals, and denied a resting-place in consecrated ground.

There have been very few men who could venture to quote the Bible in the House of Commons—perhaps because there can be no less emotional or sentimental body than that of such modern, everyday Englishmen of all types, as compose the British Parliament—perhaps because there is in all thinking men a sense of fitness which would shrink from any incongruity between the words of the lips and the actions of the life—or perhaps because of the national reserved character, which can ill bear the rending of any of the veils of conventionalism which hide so securely men's souls from their fellows, unless it be by a specially sure and practised hand. But, be that as it may, Henry Fowler was one of the few who, like John Bright, could dare to quote Scripture, and be sure that it would not jar. "I can understand," he said, in his speech on the Burials Bill, in which to quote a

London paper of that date, "Mr. Fowler earned his title to a front place in the list of coming men"—"I can understand that some representative of one of our great houses, whose family history has run side by side with our national history, would regard it as an extreme dishonour to be excluded from the last resting-place of his illustrious forefathers. And to the Nonconformist of the middle class, the words father, mother, husband, parent, child, are as dear as they are to the proudest peer that ever sat at Westminster. And though they may lack the ancestral associations they cherish in its truest intensity that feeling of kinship and friendship and affection which to-day, as three thousand years ago, finds the truest expression in the passionate utterance of the Jewish widow: 'Where thou art buried—there will I be buried also.'"

On the passing of the Burials Bill Henry Fowler received the following letter from his friend, James Fraser, Bishop of Manchester:

"Manchester, September 5th.

"MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

"Now that the Burials Bill has passed its last ordeal I must thank you for the part you took in its discussion. I admired your temper while thinking that Dissent had been rather severely and unfairly characterized by some over-vehement Churchmen in the debate. But you did not return evil for evil, but moved and carried a clause, which I regard as a great improvement on the old Clause 14, with its schedule C, while it certainly will give quite as effective a relief to the clergy. I could not go up to town without inconvenience to vote upon the Bill in its last stage, but I paired with the Bishop of Ripon in favour of the Commons Amendments. May the Bill, when it becomes law, be a means of healing some of the sores which irritate and separate Christian men who ought to be engaged in one common cause

"With kind regards,

"Yours sincerely,

"J. MANCHESTER."

It was in the Session of 1880 that the controversy, known under the name of Bradlaugh, began. The history of that controversy has been written at length in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, and it is only my father's attitude with regard to it which is of importance here. "There are two points," he said, "which would distinctly rule my conduct in reference to the Bradlaugh difficulty. The first was, I had, and could have, no possible sympathy with the views which Mr. Bradlaugh is reported to hold—views, the existence of which I deplore, but views which I don't think are either to be confuted or refuted by the unnecessary and unseemly denunciation of those who hold them. And the next point was that I could not be a party to the imposition of any religious test in the exercise of any civil right. I regard the religious passport to a civil office or honour as an injury and dishonour done to the cause of religion itself. Under the existing law every Member of the House of Commons is required, before he takes his seat, to take the oath of allegiance to the reigning Sovereign, but there is a provision permitting Quakers, Separatists, and others who have conscientious objections to taking an oath, to affirm. Mr. Bradlaugh claimed to affirm under two Statutes which enabled persons, upon whom conscientious oaths are not binding, to give testimony in Courts of Justice." The matter having been referred to a select committee, it was decided that Mr. Bradlaugh could not be allowed to affirm, and the next day he put a letter in the newspaper, stating that he intended to claim to take the oath at the House, and gave notice that the taking of that oath would be a meaningless form, and would have no effect upon his conscience. "I am of opinion," continued Henry Fowler, in giving an account of his action to his constituents, "that the taking of an oath is, in the nature of the thing, evoking the Supreme Being, and if a man does not believe in the Supreme Being, it seemed to me he could not take the oath. And I, as a Christian man, holding the views I did, would not have been, and never would be, a party to a person's doing on the floor of the House of Commons, what I should call a profane act; and I, therefore—being perfectly clear in my own mind that legally Mr. Bradlaugh could not take the oath—voted against the oath's being administered to him."

When a further select committee which was appointed, recommended that he should be allowed to affirm, thus reversing the decision of the former committee, my father's contention was that it had already been decided by committee that Mr. Bradlaugh could not affirm, and that the House should not decide by special resolution a purely legal question which belonged to courts of law. And as he did not feel justified in voting against Mr. Bradlaugh's making affirmation he declined to vote at all, as he also declined later, on the occasion when Mr. Bradlaugh was committed to the Clock Tower, because he would not be a party to sending a man to prison for doing what the most eminent lawyers agreed he had a right to do. All along he took the common-sense point of view that the House should leave it to any individual Member to claim to affirm, or to take the oath as he pleased, leaving him to run the risk of his own act, and not to legislate for particular cases. It is interesting to note that on these very lines a final settlement of this difficult case was at last effected.

The Irish question was already looming above the political horizon, and every session between 1880 and 1885 the skies were darkening, which at last broke in the great Home Rule storm of 1886, when the grand old Liberal Party, as a united one, lost its life. And though in those early days of the Government's existence, the cloud was no bigger than a man's hand, the political prophets, of whom Henry Fowler was one, saw its significance and heard the warning sound of abundance of rain.

"When Sir Robert Peel took office nearly forty years ago at the head of the largest Parliamentary majority which the century had seen, he said: 'Ireland is my difficulty.' Thirty years ago Mr. Bright said: 'At this moment in Ireland the rich are menaced with ruin and the poor are menaced with starvation.' And now in 1880 Ireland is still the difficulty of every statesman and every English Cabinet, and at this moment the rich are menaced with ruin, and the poor, I believe, are menaced with starvation." In describing and dealing with the Irish Law question, in defence of Mr. W. E. Forster's Irish Disturbance Compensation Bill, Henry Fowler showed that sudden wonderful grasp of a situation from its inner side, which was so characteristic of

his understanding of Indian affairs fifteen years later, when he became Secretary of State for India—and which also has been commented on in other matters which claimed his attention. When made Chairman of the Kent Waterworks Company by Messrs. Penn, many years afterwards, one of them remarked that what struck him as so remarkable about their new chairman was the fact, that though he had only just entered the concern, he knew more about its inner working than those who had themselves grown up in it. He never possessed the dramatic or the sympathetic power of putting himself in another person's place. He could never have said or thought anything which was not consistent with Henry Fowler. For instance, he could not understand how the novelist could make his characters say and do things contrary to the mind of the author. Again and again he would strive to correct, by simply stating: "I should never have said that," and would not see how futile that argument was in reference to all characters except that of a middle-aged statesman. The strange truth that in writing fiction characters grow, and develop, and even act, quite independently of the author's intention, was absolutely incomprehensible to him—no words could have conveyed it to his mind. But he did possess the wonderful faculty of putting himself in another person's environment, though not in their identity. It was always Henry Fowler; but he could put himself, with the quick flash of some inside power, which we can realize but never understand, into such diverse environments as that of the Irishman born and bred on the land; of the business man trained and taught by practical experience; of the Indian—representative of a mystical heathen religion and an alien far-away race; and, perhaps more wonderful still, of the Anglo-Indian with all his cliquish prejudices, and local standards, and Conservative inclinations. Into every interest which he touched he could transport himself, and give judgment, though always Henry Fowler's judgment, there. He had no personal experience of Irish life from either the landlord's or the tenant's point of view, but his son-in-law—who, as one of the Scottish clan of Hamilton which have held the North of Ireland since the Ulster Settlement of 1603, had been born and brought up in County Down, and, as a landlord's son, had an

intimate knowledge of Irish land questions, of the significance of tenant right in Ulster, and the disastrous effects to the tenant of the lack of that right outside Ulster—could not find a better, clearer understanding of that complicated question than that enunciated by my father to his constituents at the close of the session of 1880.

The hours of Parliament in those days were far longer and more strenuous than Members now, under the ægis of the twelve o'clock rule, realize. It was a common occurrence for the House to sit from four p.m. to two and three a.m. and during his first session in Parliament, as in all later ones, my father was generally one of the first to arrive and one of the last to leave. It was a great idea of his that ordinary people slept too much—just as it was that they ate too much—and he certainly justified his principles by taking a five or six hours' night, and only two meals a day. The wisdom of this was often disputed in his domestic circle, but the record of a long and exceptionally healthy life, whether on account of this abstemiousness or in spite of it, silences one's adverse criticism of his methods.

The Government programme for its first session was a full and varied one, comprising as it did, not only the larger questions of foreign policy,—particularly those dealing with affairs in Afghanistan and South Africa,—but also such home measures as the Elementary Education Act, the Employers' Liability Bill, legislation affecting farmers, and sailors, the Irish Compensation Act and the Burials Bill, and in all these Henry Fowler showed the keenest interest. Two sentiments of his expressed during this period stand out as indicators of his future political tactics—the one in connection with the Burials Bill when he said: "Upon a question which gravely affects the interests of the Church of England it is impossible to legislate except upon the principle of fair compromise"; and the other: "We want a system of local self-government." The setting of these statements was soon melted down by the development of events, but the spirit of them remained with him always. One of his most cherished principles was that of fair compromise; his favourite method, that of self-government.

The Parliament of 1880 always stood out in my father's mind as the best he had ever known. At the close of its first session he said: "That when he had been brought face to face, and side by side, with the men who sat on both sides of the House, he had been struck with the great intellectual power, the great determination to uphold the true interests of the country in all its departments, and the feeling which was brought to bear upon all questions, not simply from a party point of view, but with the determination to do what was best for the country at large. He had been struck with what he might call the judicial fairness and impartiality shown by the House of Commons as a whole on every question that was brought before it." He often in later years referred in glowing terms to his first Parliament, and he never ceased to regret the breaking-up of that great original Liberal party, that was its strength, whatever the issue of benefit might have been. Perhaps the halo of a first love surrounded it in his mind and memory, before the freshness of enthusiasm had faded, or the wonder of its novelty staled. But though there hangs round the first of anything a special charm, his enthusiasm for the House of Commons knew no abatement, even when matured by long years of familiarity and experience. He never left his first love in spirit, and even on that day when he took his seat in "another place," great though he felt the honour, glad though he was at the distinction as a crown to his labours, yet he alone knew with what a tender and yearning regret he realized that his House of Commons life was over, and the familiar green benches would know him no more.

CHAPTER IX

PARLIAMENT OF 1880—1885

"No man is born into this world, whose work
Is not born with him, there is always work
And tools to work withal, for those who will."

LOWELL.

THE whole Parliament from 1880 to 1885 was a momentous stage in Henry Fowler's history. His life as a private member was lived; and he was first offered office in 1884. He established a sure footing in the Liberal party, he brought all his powers to bear upon the questions with which Parliament was concerned, and in one or two cases he saw fit to differ from the Government and voted against its measures. There were some who said that he was offered office only because he was too dangerous and powerful a personality to be left outside the fortress of the party, but there are always some who see what is cheap and think themselves clever in cavilling at it. He was, I believe, offered office because it was evident that he was a valuable and true statesman, and that a Government, which was already illumined by such great lights as its Premier, Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, John Bright, and many others, yet would be enriched by the presence of the young, untried, private member—for young he was in Parliamentary life—who in time to come so fully justified the political confidence which had been thus early reposed in him.

But though on the one hand Mr. Gladstone could not be blind to Henry Fowler's ability and powers, though he could not but appreciate his services, and acknowledge certain of his claims—

and though on the other hand my father fully realized the greatness of his first leader, and paid to the full all honour to him to whom honour was due, yet he was never one of Mr. Gladstone's favourites ; he never felt that the veteran statesman in his heart of hearts gave him full measure running over, but only a bare acknowledgment of indisputable claims. This lack of sympathy had its roots, my father believed, in the condemning fact to Mr. Gladstone that he was not a Churchman ; and not only that he was not a member of the Church of England, but that he was a leading member of a Nonconforming Church. The negative position might have been forgiven him, as it was in the case of others whom Mr. Gladstone drew into his inner circle, but the positive one of being an enthusiastic and active Wesleyan put him, as it were, outside the personal sympathies of a man whose intensity of convictions built up, as it is always wont to do, a wall of reserve between him and those who actively differ from him on religious questions. On the platform of Liberalism, where the Nonconformist conscience is a powerful asset, they met and agreed, but a man's personal preferences not unfrequently lie hidden beneath his political policy ; and Mr. Gladstone, in spite of all the bitterness which was hurled at him by the Church of England, was, at heart, one of her most orthodox and devoted sons. My father always felt the underlying something which separated him from the real sympathy of his chief, was the latter's consciousness that he was a Wesleyan.

It is just a side-light on Henry Fowler's character that early in the session of 1882 he moved an Address for the preservation of the offices of Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer against the Government, who wished to abolish them by Order in Council, as they were empowered to do by the Judicature Act of 1873. The legal dignity, the historic significance, and even the picturesque value, of these ancient titles appealed to Henry Fowler as might not have been expected in one of the ordinary Radical type. He was a Radical so far as he was a born reformer, but he was a statesman above and beyond his party, and he could differentiate between the worth of that which is historically noble, and the weakness of that which is practically worn out. He saw that some things are the better

and stronger for having matured in the history of nations, and he repudiated the arrogance which dares to cut down the old trees of tradition to make room for a multiplicity of allotments in which only cabbages can be grown. Where reform can improve let it be fearlessly undertaken, but let that which is good stand in the security of merit. It was no typical Radical spirit which said: "The retention of these two great offices would preserve that historic continuity which every advanced reformer must value, and which every Conservative reformer would gratefully cherish. It might be said that this was sentiment, but sentiment played no little part in the national life. It was not always wise to disregard sentiment, especially in the administration of justice. For six centuries the four chief judges of England had borne the titles of Lord High Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice of England, the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and those were worthy to rank side by side with the peerage of the territorial aristocracy. For twenty generations they stood forward showing that the highest honour to which a citizen can attain was the administration of justice; and as they recollected the long roll of men risen from the ranks to fill these high offices, the country learned this lesson, that no prejudice, no favour, could bar the path by which men climbed from the humblest ranks to the highest dignity of the State."

In secular affairs my father was somewhat of a ritualist. He loved the ancient customs which Parliament has handed down from one generation to another, and to abolish any of them would have seemed to him a desecration. The "Who goes home," the closing of the door in the face of Black Rod, indeed every detail of the ritual of Parliament, I have heard him often describe with a delighted spirit of appreciation. As in the old days in Wolverhampton he strove for the building and establishing of certain offices which should retain the dignity of justice, and the effective administration of the law, so he always clung to the outward forms of such sentiment as ennobled the ruling of England. And perhaps it was not altogether in matters secular that he was in some measure a ritualist. He possessed in common with most of his fellow-countrymen a dread of pretentiousness, and it is

that feeling, as well as the national one of reserve, that will always prevent the universal adoption of ornate ritual in religious matters. The Englishman by nature hates anything showy. Bestow upon him the honour of an Order, and he will shrink from wearing its ribbon whenever he can justifiably appear without it. So is he ever reserved as regards his deeper feelings, and in religion pre-eminently as one of them. Sharing in these national characteristics to the full, my father yet loved orderliness and a certain old-fashioned ritual in his Nonconforming, religious life. The chapel, which he was largely instrumental in building in Wolverhampton, and which he regularly attended when at home, was the first in the neighbourhood which had a full liturgical service; and the Rev. I. E. Page, one of the Wesleyan ministers who was at Trinity Chapel, writes thus of this particular trait. "Lord Wolverhampton is remembered as a loyal Methodist of advanced ideas, but in relation to the Church of England, belonging to the school of his father and his compeers. Ever loyal to his own Church he would have disowned the name 'Dissenter,' probably for two reasons—that he had grown up from the ground, so to speak, in Wesleyan Methodism, while on the other hand he had no objection to an Established Church. Besides this he was possessed of what has been called a liturgical mind, always attaching great importance to orderliness in public worship, and particularly in the administration of the Sacraments. He was impatient of the least deviation from the authorized form of service. Indeed he wrote a pamphlet to show from the legal standpoint, that any sanctioned alteration in the Communion Office might jeopardize the security of the Trust property of the Connexion. He was proud of the order of worship at Trinity Chapel, and on one occasion told the writer how, when dining with the then Bishop of Gloucester, he had interested him with a description of the service in which the full Anglican Liturgy, with a few verbal alterations, was in use" After his death one of the leading articles on him, I believe in the *Guardian*, stated that "he was by the accident of birth a Nonconformist and a Liberal, but by nature he was a High Churchman and a Conservative"—and perhaps as the words "Liberal Nonconformist" are understood nowadays there may be a great deal of truth in such a

statement. Indeed it was an ancestral spirit which bound him so closely to Methodism. He had been born in it, and bred in it, and therefore he loved it as a certain type of man always loves that which he has inherited ; but doctrinally he was undoubtedly a High Churchman. He believed in the Real Presence and the efficacy of the Sacrament in conveying a spiritual grace to the recipient above and beyond its being a mere commemorative Feast. The only point in which he seemed to disagree with the Church of England was in his disbelief in the necessity of Apostolic succession. He read his Bible from a daily service book, he loved the beauty and comprehensiveness of the collects, and he had no dealings with the fanatic's idea of sudden freaks of inspiration. He was impatient for the most part of extempore prayers in the order of service, and he always conducted his own family worship from a book of collects and other set prayers. "When a man has prayed the Litany he has covered all needs," he would say, and he liked the Litany read every Sunday. He and his son-in-law, the Rev. Robert Hamilton, were the closest of friends during the last few years of his life ; and though the latter was a High Churchman, and the son of an Irish landlord, the two would smile at their agreement on almost every question of Church and State which they discussed.

The term Liberal and even Radical in Henry Fowler's day meant something different from what they do to-day, and the old-fashioned Liberalism was in some respects more Conservative than the democratic Toryism of modern politicians. But where Conservatism applies to the upholding of ancient dignity, without an injury to present needs, there Henry Fowler was a Conservative indeed. Such questions as the payment of Members, for instance, filled him with disdain, since he knew that the best a man has he neither buys nor sells ; and Parliamentary life to Henry Fowler, demanded his best, and the demand met with a supply, though four hundred pounds a year would not have covered it. Though keenly practical and utilitarian, a man of business methods and clear head, he held and retained those high ideals of public service which were the pride and glory of Queen Victoria's great reign.

During this Parliament Henry Fowler met for the first time his future friend and political comrade, John Morley. They

were dining with Mr. Chamberlain, and John Morley's attention was arrested by the able conversation and remarkable grasp of every subject upon which Henry Fowler touched. He inquired who the stranger was, and was told that he was the newly-elected Member for Wolverhampton. "That man will go far," was John Morley's comment.

In 1881, on the death of Lord Beaconsfield, my father enunciated some of his beliefs in political leadership and expressed his power of appreciation of what was fine wherever he found it. He never wore the blinkers of political partisanship, and so he saw further, and possibly fared worse for doing so, than the ordinary, enthusiastic party man. "It is one of the best features of English public life," he said, "that distinguished genius, and eminent public services, and spotless private character, allied to those other two great qualifications, are not the property or pride of any one political party, but are the common property of us all as Englishmen—and I am sure that the Liberals have, together with the Conservative party, mourned the loss as sincerely of that eminently distinguished man who now for nearly half a century has occupied such a foremost position in the politics of England and the politics of Europe. We cannot note the passing away of this great man without noting the passing away of an era. For the last three-quarters of a century, certainly since the death of Pitt and Fox, no two men have so completely impersonated the two great political opinions which divide the bulk of the people of this country into two great political parties, as have Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone, and I see no probability of any successor to either of them in that respect. Political principles will remain of course, and political views, but I think it will be a long time before either the Liberal or Conservative party will find any man, in either party, who so completely impersonates the political belief of each party, and with such marvellous ability and astonishing power as these two eminent men have done certainly during the last twenty-five years."

The session of 1881 was one of the most arduous sessions which the annals of Parliament record. There were legacies of trouble left by the late Government in Afghanistan, in the Transvaal,

in Turkey and in Ireland, but the session was pre-eminently an Irish one, and was notable for the passing of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Bill, which gave to the tenants of Ireland the celebrated "three F's"—fair rent, fixed rent and free sale. The Irish difficulty was no new one, and Henry Fowler marked this with his usual fairness in a speech he made in Liverpool in June, 1881. "I have no sympathy with the nonsensical folly which attributes the present state of Ireland to the policy of the present Government, or to the policy of the late Government, or to the policy of any recent Government. We are dealing with a deep-rooted, deep-seated, disease of many generations' standing. The recent legislation of this country towards Ireland has been fair and just, liberal and progressive: it is our ancestors who are to blame. We may repeal their cruel laws, but we cannot avoid the consequences of them. We the English people, in our government of Ireland, violated each law of political economy. We tried to trample down every principle of freedom, of justice; we sacrificed the masses of the people with all their rights and all their interests in order to aggrandize an alien class, who, while they claimed all the rights of property, were supremely indifferent to every one of its duties. . . . Now I believe that the Irish land agitation was right in its inception, and if the Land League had followed within right and constitutional limits I think it would have secured the confidence and support of the great mass of the English people. Desperate men say desperate things, and advocate desperate remedies, but statesmen must stand unmoved amongst such clamour. I think that the match which was applied to the powder was the unfortunate and unwise action of the House of Lords in throwing out the Compensation for Disturbance Bill last year." And then he went on to point out that as long as the Duke of Wellington lived, his wise and statesmanlike counsel prevented the Peers, as on the memorable night of the repeal of the Corn Laws, from acting against the House of Commons and the people behind it. And that wise counsel would have been repeated by Lord Derby, and Lord Beaconsfield, he felt sure, on equally momentous occasions; but the unwisdom of some of the House of Lords' dealings against the House of Commons prompted Henry Fowler even so long ago

to declare : " The same nation as in 1832 found out that its representative Chamber was a farce and a sham, and knew how to reform the House of Commons,—the same nation, if they find that the House of Lords is out of harmony with constitutional progress and development of free institutions will know how to reform the House of Peers "

But while the Irish battle was raging, and the whole forces of Parliament were, under Mr. Gladstone's leadership, concentrated upon it, there were other questions in which my father took a great interest. That of national expenditure was one which always appealed specially to him, and he spoke several times against its, to his mind, unnecessary increase. " I should be the last man to deprecate expenditure on education, if it were well applied; but it behoves the guardians of the public purse in this, as in other matters, to see that they get their money's worth. There is such a thing as extravagant educational expenditure; and it may be accepted as an axiom that a system by which the Imperial Exchequer provides funds for local authorities to spend, is always extravagant."

He also hoped that Parliament would before long devote itself not only to the readjustment, but to the reduction of national expenditure to the relief of the taxpayers. " If the Liberal party did not reduce the national expenditure they would not be honest. They stood upon the platform of reducing that expenditure: they charged the Tories with spending too much, and if they went quietly on spending as much as the Tories, they were not an honest party, and he for one would be clear of that business. Any effort to reduce the expenditure was met by an enormous force of permanent officials which was almost irresistible." And when Mr. Gladstone ejaculated the meaning remark that he only wished he had the power of regulating the national expenditure—implying that there were modes of expenditure which were even beyond the power of the Government or the Chancellor of the Exchequer to control—Henry Fowler added that " though it might not be in the power of the Government, it was in the power of the constituencies to do so, and when they made up their minds it would be done." But he also never veered from his convictions that

there is a rightful expenditure when extravagance may be the truest economy. "I am sure," he declared, "no Englishman will grudge any expenditure necessary to keep our Navy, which is our first and last line of defence, supreme among the Navies of the world." And, in connection with the financial provision of the Land Bill, "we should not haggle about a few millions in order to give peace, contentment and prosperity to the people of Ireland, who have suffered so long and so severely by the unjust legislation of England, for which we Liberals as well as Conservatives are responsible, and which we are bound to redress." He never advocated a cheese-paring policy, and though his views were strong as to the necessity for strict economy in administration, for the careful consideration of any increase of expenditure before it was carried out, yet he never grudged the use of money for a public good which the country could well afford. He always spoke strongly against the idea of any contributory basis for the granting of Old Age Pensions, however it might reduce the call upon the Exchequer; and was in favour of a wise expenditure in carrying out legislation to improve the social conditions of the people. He was a great advocate for the reform of the Poor Laws, following the report of the Royal Commission, and I have heard him express the opinion that when the Liberal Government came into power again in 1906 it would have been his policy for it first to have dealt with the Reform of the Poor Laws, then to the granting of Old Age Pensions, and to have let the Education Bill wait for awhile.

The whole of my father's opinions and life were so uniformly consistent that it is always safe to deduce a conclusion from the greater to the less, or from the less to the greater. In private life he often said: "Be just before you are generous"—his public policy came under the same heading. He would be generous to the needs of the masses, but he would not forget the justice that is due to the tax-payer, even if he happens to be a rich man. His own personal expenditure was economical in detail and very carefully overlooked. His ledgers accounted for the pence of all his life—but in many matters he was lavishly generous, and he was a great believer in paying for one's own generosity. He was a large

giver to charitable objects, but what he gave, he himself went without. To leave money to charities is no true charity, was his creed. Real charity is to give it in one's lifetime, and not to throw the burden on those that come after you, of a compulsory giving of which you wish to claim the credit, without feeling the loss. And he carried this out by giving largely in his lifetime but by leaving no charitable legacies at his death. He never approved of a policy, and he would not believe in it now, of emptying the tax-payer's pockets, and then filling his hands with a parcel of benefits as a gift from the Government. Teach people how to spend, and teach them also how to give. I have heard him put questions of national expenditure before a mass meeting, and make every man of them feel that he was getting his money's worth in the benefits to his country which his taxes went to secure. His own belief that money is a trust to be used as is best, not as is most popular or most pleasant, was his belief of public money, and he handled both public and private exchequers with the same uplifting touch. He did not believe in the miserliness or the meanness of Englishmen—but he believed profoundly in their common sense, and that they must not only know on what their money is being expended nationally, but they must control and approve of the same. If they did that, he never believed there would be a lack of funds anywhere, and wherever such lack existed he blamed the methods, but not the public. He, as a Wesleyan, had been taught how to give, and he always said that the willingness of Nonconformist almsgiving lay, partly in their having learned how to give from their youth upwards, and partly because they controlled the expenditure of the money that is subscribed. Where parishes of the Church of England failed to raise necessary funds, his theory was that in the first place they had inherited so much from the generosity of their ancestors in endowments, that they were not alive to their own responsibilities in maintaining those who ministered to them in holy things; and in the second place, that the laity would never pay for a parson whom they had no power to choose, or to get rid of. But give the laity the power of the purse, and they would never fail to fill it. It would be impossible for a man to have a greater faith in his fellows than

had Henry Fowler; and it was in the great middle class, rather than the upper or the lower, that he had the greatest faith of all. He was proud of belonging to the middle class, which he always declared was the backbone of the British nation. He realized the creative and compelling power of responsibility, and it is the middle class which bears the responsibility of a nation. The upper class is irresponsible because it has nothing to gain; the lower class is irresponsible because it has nothing to lose. The extremes meet; too much and too little are both outside the border-line of everything to gain or to lose—which is the guerdon of the middle classes. And therefore it was in the middle classes that Henry Fowler would have vested powers parallel to their responsibilities, and to them that he looked for the welfare and prosperity of the nation.

At the opening of the Wolverhampton Park on June 8th, 1881, my father uttered these characteristic words: "Some people have expressed regret that this park has not been given to the town. I do not share in that regret. I prefer, as a Wolverhampton man, and I think it is a more honourable and straightforward course, that we should buy what we want and pay for it. And the people of Wolverhampton have bought this park. They are under no social, no political, obligation to any man for having given them this park. It is their own to-day to do with as they like, and I am sure they will preserve it, and maintain it, and develop it." He never liked himself to be beholden to any man; and to pay his way was a principle of life from which he never deviated. Even ordinary bills he deprecated and was always an advocate for ready money. He would often quote a rule of his father's never to wear a suit of clothes until it was paid for.

The great Irish session of 1881 was stamped by obstruction from beginning to end, and this impediment in public business was a matter of deep concern to the statesmanlike soul of Henry Fowler. He considered that the House of Commons was too delicate and magnificent a piece of machinery to be treated as an idle toy, to be spoiled by any mischievous or silly child that plays with it. Before Her Majesty's Government could carry out any of the pledges on the faith of which they took

office, before the House of Commons could be restored to that legislative freedom and power which are essential to the right discharge of its duties, and before the constituencies could have that effective control which they ought to have over the legislation and policy of this country, the forms of the House of Commons must be altered so as to harmonize with the strict requirements of the age, so as to enable the business of the country to be done as it ought to be done by sensible men, in a sensible way, with sensible results. It was not only the obstruction of the Irish party, but also that of the Conservative, which he deprecated. He had seen as deliberate, persistent, obstruction from the Conservative benches as ever he saw from the Home Rule party. Lord Randolph Churchill was no child in that business, he could testify. He spoke jocosely to him one night and said: "I am learning something from you. I am watching and learning." Lord Randolph asked, "What?" and he replied, "I am learning how to obstruct. I suppose the time will come when your people will be in power and when you will occupy a very important position in the new ministry. I am learning a lesson."

Another question which he touched upon in the interstice of that Parliamentary year was the old, and now new one, of Free Trade and Protection; and this in connexion with a policy raised by the Fair Traders—a small body of unofficial Conservatives, led by the Member for Preston. He said: "When a man tells me that Free Trade has failed, I say that every fact of moral, social, physical, commercial progress in the country is an unanswerable argument against him;" and one cannot help noting how the present policy of Tariff Reform is, after all, only an old Conservative friend dressed up in modern habiliments, which Free Traders have been fighting ever since the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846; and it was especially interesting to my father to be identified in Wolverhampton with a constituency, the Member for which—Mr. Villiers—was the first man who ever proposed the repeal of the Corn Laws in the reformed Parliament. It also may be interesting to Free Traders to-day to read how a statesman over thirty years ago put the question before his constituents. He said: "Where are you going to begin—where are you going to put on

those retaliatory duties? Now you must put them on one of three things: foreign manufactures, foreign raw material, or foreign food. £411,000,000 represents what we bought last year. Of that, £360,000,000 was paid for food and raw material. There is not much margin to deal with the manufactured articles. But who would pay the tax upon these manufactured articles? We should. Most of these manufactured articles are things which are not made in England and cannot be made in England. They are things which we buy for our own advantage, and if a tax were put upon them, we—the English consumer—would have to pay that tax. I do not think that would be any argument for the foreigner to abandon a protectionist policy. It would be to say that we prefer to pay seven and sixpence for what we might have bought for five shillings. Then will you put a tax on raw material? Is there any sane man who would propose that raw material, which is the staple of this country, should be taxed? I don't think that there is a single politician in this country who would so purpose to destroy the trade and manufactures of this country. What then is left? The only feasible policy, the only practical policy, the policy which the Conservatives are avowing, is to tax the foreign food. Fifty years ago protection meant the Corn Laws, and to-day Fair Trade, which we have stripped of its flimsy disguise, means restoring the Corn Laws. They make no secret of it, and they propound the wonderful doctrine that it is better to have a dear loaf and high wages, than a cheap loaf and low wages. But what are the facts? What does the history of this country prove to demonstration? That dear food is invariably followed by low wages. If you raise the price of food, you diminish the productiveness both of capital and labour, and profits go down and wages go down, and the reason of it is as evident as the fact itself. It is not the ladies of London, it is the farmers' wives and daughters, and the workmen's wives and daughters, and the servant girls of England that keep the looms of Lancashire going so far as home trade is concerned. If you decrease the spending margin of a working man's income, if he is getting twenty-five shillings per week, and his bread costs him five shillings (and he must have bread), and if you make the bread

cost him ten shillings, you have diminished the spending margin, you have diminished his power to go and buy other things ; and the inevitable result is a decrease of profits and a decrease of wages. . . .

"The tax which Protection levies never has found, and never will find, its way into the public exchequer. It finds its way into the pockets of the privileged classes. I say no more dangerous, no more revolutionary proposal, has been made by responsible legislators and statesmen than the proposal to confiscate the industry and the property of working men in order to swell the profits of the wealthiest, privileged classes in the world."

As far back as the year 1881, Henry Fowler seems to have turned his attention to the question of local government for the country as it then existed for the towns, and this was the germ of his Parish Councils Bill, which was passed in 1894. He pointed out in one of his local speeches in 1881, that if it was right for the inhabitants of a town to have the management of their own affairs, the election of their own representatives, the raising and spending of their own taxes, it was right that other citizens who live in country districts should have the same privileges. And of this idea he never loosened his hold.

The political history of 1881 contained but one question—that of Ireland, and but one name—that of Mr. Gladstone; but that can be read elsewhere. This is not meant to be a political history, but the simple life story of a man who happened to be a politician, and, therefore, whatever reflected or developed or expressed his personality looms larger than perhaps its rightful proportions. And the Irish policy was never one of these which lay closest to his heart, or moved him to his most enthusiastic efforts. Without disregarding the claims of Ireland, without wavering in a desire for justice and peace in Ireland, in Henry Fowler's heart of hearts he always considered her a rock of difficulty and danger, and he never forgave her for being the rock on which the great Liberal party split and was wrecked; for he mourned that split and wreckage to the day of his death as the saddest destruction of the greatest party which ever met and ruled in Westminster.

CHAPTER X

PARLIAMENT OF 1880—1885 (*continued*)

"Let princes and states choose such ministers as are more sensible of duty than of rising, and such as love business rather upon conscience than upon bravery."—BACON.

THE Session of 1881 was described by Henry Fowler as "exclusively devoted to the passing of one measure, perhaps in its conception and execution, I believe in its ultimate beneficial results—when time has been allowed to work its way—one of the most wonderful and one of the wisest, as well as one of the best measures, that was ever passed by the English House of Commons. But, nevertheless," he pointed out, "that measure was not inscribed upon our banner when we fought the electoral campaign, and the measures to which we then pledged our adherence and are anxious to see carried into effect, are waiting." He bitterly blamed the obstruction which not only clogged the Irish measure, but completely prevented the bringing forward of those other measures to which he felt the party was pledged; he realized that such obstruction must be controlled so that it should no longer hamper, even paralyse, the powers of the House of Commons. "The whole legislative machinery," he declared, "is brought to a standstill because there is placed in the power of a minority, and the power of a very few men, the means and the instruments of stopping all legislation whatever. I am not prepared to see the House of Commons shorn of its past freedom and power. I do not fear this cry of which we hear so much about gagging the House of Commons. If there is any party in the country who is jealous of the rights of minorities that party is the Liberal party. The

history of our party for the last three-quarters of a century has been a history of struggles and battles in the interests of minorities. Our fathers fought all the battles with which the Liberal party are associated and they never condescended to abuse the forms of the House of Commons, they never condescended to thwart the legitimate policy of what was then the legitimate majority. The weapons they used were arguments, not obstruction: they convinced public opinion. That is the way to win a fight in this country." And later, for the practical remedying of this evil, he pointed out: "Minorities have a moral power which is weakened, if not defeated, by all unfair attempts to subvert or arrest the legitimate action of the majority, which, for the time being, constitutionally represents the opinion of the country. There is, however, another interest which claims to be heard on this question—I mean the public interest. This House exists to work as well as to talk, to govern as well as to criticize, to legislate as well as to debate, to protect and extend rights and liberties and privileges of which it is the supreme guardian, and which will be seriously endangered if the House of Commons is lowered in public estimation, or incapacitated for the discharge of its vast and varied duties. On these grounds, therefore, I support the limit of the length of debate." The question then was, as to how the length of debate was to be limited, and Henry Fowler was very strong in his opinions on this matter. "I could not assent to a proposal which would place in the hands of any majority, whether a bare majority, or two-thirds majority, or nine-tenths majority, the power of summarily deciding without check or control when a debate should close. The determination of a question after the question has been fully discussed, is the function and the right of a majority; to decide that such a question shall be determined without consideration is not the function of any majority." He then proposed as being the strongest guarantee for the privileges of minorities and the safest mode of expediting public business, that the Speaker should, acting judicially, exercise a two-fold judicial function. First he must form the opinion that it is the evident sense of the House that the debate should close, and then he may, if in his opinion it is right to do so, inform the House of the opinion at which

he has arrived. And this Henry Fowler felt would be the true protection of a minority, holding as he did that the Speaker, whether selected on party grounds or not, would never be disposed to employ the privileges and responsibilities of his high office for party purposes. This seems like an exposition of the Rules of Procedure, which later were adopted by the Government, but, as a matter of fact, these words were spoken and these opinions formed by my father before any such rules had been formulated.

In the Session of 1882 Henry Fowler was entrusted with the piloting of the Conveyancing Act through the House of Commons. Lord Cairns first wrote to him on that matter at the beginning of the year :

“ Lindisfarne,

“ Bournemouth,

“ January 30th, 1882.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ I should be very glad if we could pass a Supplementary Act this year with the provisions in the Conveyancing Bill which had to be omitted under pressure last Session. Would you be disposed to introduce the Bill in the House of Commons, and to take steps in the opening of Parliament to obtain such precedence for it as is possible before the Order Book gets clogged.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours faithfully,

“ CAIRNS.”

And again in March he wrote :

“ 5, Cromwell Houses,

“ 21st March, 1882.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ The Conveyancing Bill, 1882, will be read in the House of Lords 3rd time on Tuesday, and will then go to the House of Commons. I hope you will kindly consent to take charge of it this year in the same efficient manner in which you did its predecessor in 1881, and will get it into its

position so as to be printed and circulated before Easter. I am sure that the sooner after Easter it can be got to a 2nd reading the better chance it will have of passing. I will send you the Bill and a memorandum which has been circulated with it in the House of Lords.

"Yours faithfully,

"CAIRNS."

After the passing of the Act he received the following letter from Lord Cairns :

"5, Cromwell Houses,

"2nd August, 1882.

"DEAR MR. FOWLER,

"In case I should not have the pleasure of seeing you before leaving town I wish to offer you my best thanks for the trouble you have taken, and the excellent judgment you have shown, in conducting the Conveyancing Bill through the House of Commons. The reforms effected by the Act of last year, to the passing of which you rendered the same kind assistance, and by this measure will, I feel sure, be of the greatest public utility, and do more in the way of simplifying our law than many more ambitious statutes. I quite agree with you as to the Commons' Amendments, and both as to this and the Settled Land Bill, I have accepted them *en bloc*, although I would have been glad to have made some verbal alterations. The Settled Land Bill will, I feel sure, cause an immense amount of most beneficial dealing with landed property.

"Believe me,

"Yours faithfully,

"CAIRNS."

The late Lord Chancellor had introduced some two or three years previously a measure for reforming the tenure, transfer and inheritance of land, which was not passed at the time, but in 1882 the Conveyancing Act carried still further that attempt made by Lord Cairns to facilitate the sale and purchase of land.

During this Session my father was appointed to serve on two Select Committees, and so was becoming more and more associated with Parliamentary life, and more and more absorbed in it. He took an active part in the passing of the Married Women's Property Act, but the *pièce de résistance* of all legislation at this time was Ireland, and Irish policy filled up the practical programme of every month. Other measures could only be sandwiched in, but all public attention and Parliamentary efforts were concentrated on the great Irish problems and unrest. "The outlook at the beginning of 1882," he so tells the story, "was dark and dangerous. The Land Act had not had much time to exert its influence or to indicate its probable effects. Evictions were proceeding with a severity, and on a scale, calculated to provoke the most determined and hostile resistance; the leaders of the Irish party were incarcerated at the will of the Executive without any opportunity of defence, without any right of trial. It would be idle to disguise the fact that the working of the Coercion Act of 1881 was received with unconcealed dissatisfaction by a large section of the Liberal party. The Land Act could not have a fair trial until the question of arrears was settled, and the Government intimated that they were prepared to legislate in that direction. When that announcement was made, there was a general feeling that it was impossible to continue the imprisonment of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, and in a few days the Government decided to release all the Members of Parliament who were confined at Kilmainham. Coupled with that announcement was that of the resignation of Mr. Forster, the Chief Secretary, and Lord Cowper, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who were unable to agree with their colleagues in this new departure of their policy. . . .

"On the Tuesday Mr. Forster resigned, on the Thursday Lord Frederick Cavendish accepted the post, and on the Sunday the whole civilized world was startled by the announcement that the new Chief Secretary had been cruelly murdered under circumstances of deplorable ferocity, in broad daylight in Phoenix Park, and within two hundred yards of spectators, who thought that they were looking on an ordinary street brawl. I shall never forget the House of Commons on the Monday evening, nor the

circumstances under which Mr. Gladstone, bowed down with sorrow, moved the House to pay its last formal tribute of respect to one of its most genial, most accomplished, most popular and most promising Members. This terrible tragedy compelled the Government to recast their legislative intentions. Two measures, the Crimes Prevention Bill and the Arrears Bill were promptly introduced, on the passing of both of which they staked the existence of the Government."

It was at this time that the occupation of Egypt became an active question, and Henry Fowler made the following defence of Mr Gladstone's policy—a policy which cost the Prime Minister the loss of a valued colleague in Mr. Bright. "Was the Government justified in the military intervention in Egypt? Holding as I do the opinion that war unless it is an absolute necessity is an awful crime—I should always speak with the greatest respect for those who, carrying that principle to its utmost limits, object to war under any circumstances and for any end. Their policy will prevail some day. The time will come when the nations will beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks—but the time has not yet come, and if our interests are attacked by military force, they must be defended by military force. The possession of our empire—an empire which has been an unspeakable boon to all the races subject to its sway—an empire which has promoted peace and happiness, truth and justice, to an extent that no other empire which this world has ever seen has done—that empire imposes upon us duties and responsibilities from which we should be free if our territory was limited to our sea-girt isle. But Her Majesty reigns over two hundred and fifty millions of British subjects in India, Ceylon and British Burmah, and the highway to that vast empire lies through Egypt—not only the highway to that vast empire, but the principal highway to our enormous colonies of Australia and New Zealand. Four-fifths of the shipping and commerce which pass through the Suez Canal are British, and these figures but dimly represent the gigantic commercial interests which are involved. A series of treaties and international obligations have invested us in Egypt with special rights which impose

upon us the duty, not only of protecting our own interests, but of exerting our power and our influence for the benefit of the Egyptian people. As a consequence of this there has been an enormous influx of English capital and labour into Egypt. These facts impose upon us necessities, rights, and duties, which we can neither ignore nor disregard, and in the event of any successful defiance of English power by the Mohammedan population of Egypt, a rising would probably have taken place in our Asiatic possessions, the consequences of which would have dwindled into utter insignificance even the sad loss of life and property which has followed upon our campaign in Egypt."

The following Session of 1883 was distinguished chiefly in Henry Fowler's eyes by the passing of the Corrupt Practices Bill. He told his constituents that "the last General Election was ascertained to have cost between two and three millions of money. Startled by this fact and also by the disgraceful disclosures which had been made before the Election Commissioners, public feeling was aroused, public feeling demanded, that whatever else Parliament did, or left undone, it should make a thorough, a bonâ-fide, and an honest attempt to remove this scandal. Now some of us have heard cynical politicians say 'Why should not a man derive some personal advantage from the possession of the franchise? why should not a man sell his vote?' Always answer that question by another, 'Why should not a jurymen sell his verdict?' Our constitution has placed in the hands of the people a very large share in the administration of the law, and I can conceive no greater crime against justice than the betrayal of that solemn trust. The constitution has placed in the hands of the people no small share in the enactment of the law, in the direction of public policy, and in the control of the Executive, and no greater crime against constitutional government, against free institutions, against law, and against liberty, can be committed than the betrayal of that equally solemn trust. Every Englishman whose name is on the electoral roll is bound by a pledge, binding his conscience as solemnly as if he were sworn, that he will 'well and truly try,' and according to the best of his judgment 'a true deliverance make' upon the momentous issues which his verdict will decide, and the

sale of that birthright for any mess of pottage is a personal dishonour and a national danger."

My father also took some part in the Bankruptcy Act, serving on the Grand Committee under Mr. Chamberlain. He spoke in favour of sixpenny telegrams, and the Agricultural Holdings Act. He also foresaw in the treatment by the House of Lords of this latter Act that a time would come when the two great Houses of Parliament would stand in conflict, and when, as in all hand-to-hand fights, much would be lost which wise compromise and self-imposed reform could have eventually preserved. "Twice within the last fifty years the legislature has reformed, in obedience to the will of the nation, the House of Commons, and we are now on the eve of a third Reform Bill which I believe will not yield to its predecessors in the magnitude of the changes which it will effect. The time is coming when men will ask why should not the House of Lords be reformed so as to retain—and I am anxious to retain—the Second Chamber in harmony with the will of the nation,—devoting the talents, the opportunities, and the power which they undoubtedly possess, not for the protection of a class but for the benefit of a nation?"

During the session no great advance was marked in Henry Fowler's career by any special incident, but he was slowly and surely marching on to the beginning of his official life. . . . In August of 1883 he received the following letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire :

" House of Lords,

" August 11th, 1883.

" DEAR MR. FOWLER,

" Would it be at all in accordance with your wishes to be appointed a Deputy-Lieutenant for Staffordshire?—if so I shall be happy to make the necessary recommendation for the appointment.

" Believe me,

" Yours truly,

" WROTTESELEY,"

He accepted the same, but in rather a half-hearted way. A scarlet coat was never the garb for Henry Fowler, and I remember his saying with rather an amused smile at the cocked hat: "It makes me look like a General." He felt the incongruity of himself in any military trappings, for never was there a truer civilian in every fibre of his thought and being than my father; and later on, though he loved the blue civilian uniform which he wore as a Minister of the Crown, he was still hampered by the sword, which was always in his way and a perplexity to him to manipulate. For physically he was rather a clumsy man, and he had very little use for his hands. He could not use his hands, for instance, in any game—he could not throw a ball, or hold a bat, or wield a golf-club. He tried the latter, but his awkwardness was colossal. To button his collar was a feat which appeared at the time to tax all his physical powers, and to tie a tie was absolutely beyond them. He had no mechanical talent whatever, nor any deftness of touch. His physical movements were all the exact opposite of his mental ones, in which his quickness and alertness and capacity were amazing. He always said that even the act of writing was a pain to him, because it involved a physical movement. He walked as a necessity, but I never saw him run a step in my life. Every one of his powers seemed moulded in the form of work, as even intellectual games he never grasped, nor cared to try to play. He has taken a hand at whist at home, but in that he did not learn even to recognize the cards by sight, but would deliberately count the pips to ascertain the card—smiling meanwhile, with us, at his own utter ineptitude. It was in many ways a pity that he did not know how to play, for when he needed recreation he did not know where to find it beyond his book-shelves, the whole system sometimes needs other recreation than a change of work, but Henry Fowler could never find it. I well remember the oppressiveness in our home on Bank Holidays. He never knew what to do except to rearrange his books; a proceeding which absorbed all the divers energies which the house was capable of producing, to assist him, and ended in a chaos on the floor of unappropriated volumes and a change in their wonted situations, which baffled us all for

many weeks in finding books we wanted in the library. Even the ordinary Saturday half-holiday was a laborious experience and quite the heaviest in hand of all the days of the week.

In a letter written to him by Mr. John Morley in the year 1898, when my father was enjoying a holiday at Skibo Castle, the beautiful Highland home of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, there stands this sentence: "You are the most industrious of public men, and though I am sure you like work much better than play, yet play is necessary. I hope you like Skibo as well as I did. The air on the Dornoch Links and the prospect pleased me as much as anything that I have found in this island."

My father attended the Leeds Conference in October, 1883, and took a prominent part in it. That Conference was on Parliamentary reform, and also had a material influence on the course which the Government subsequently took in the extension of the franchise and the redistribution of seats. And in January, 1884, he presided at the Conference on Parliamentary reform of the Western Counties delegates at Plymouth. In speaking, Henry Fowler had a knack of forcing a question into some terse and easily-remembered sentence or illustration from which text, so to speak, he embarked on his discourse. The need for Parliamentary reform, including extension of the franchise and redistribution of seats, he explained to the people of Plymouth first in three brief statements: "There are in the United Kingdom six and a half millions of householders—of whom about three millions only have the right of voting in the election for Members of Parliament, and one third of the electorate return two-thirds of the House of Commons, and two-thirds of the electorate return one-third of the House of Commons. We hold that the majority of the electors shall return the majority of Members to Parliament." His idea was, that if you put the matter into a nutshell, the man in the street would take it home in his pocket, while he would only listen to, and then forget, a more elaborate and detailed description. He wrote at this time the following letter to Mr. John Morley after the latter's speech at Newcastle:

“ Woodthorne,

“ Wolverhampton,

“ 26th December, 1883.

“ DEAR MORLEY,

“ I read your Newcastle speech with admiration and approbation—but (oh, these buts!) while admitting your premises on one topic, I could not see my way to adopt your conclusion. The point is the freehold vote. You have in speech or writing propounded the opinion that the Government will as a rule prefer the line of the least resistance. I feel sure, that if we are to carry a good Reform Bill we shall (to some extent) have to be influenced by this axiom. Beginning *de novo* one man, one vote, is the principle alike of pure Liberalism and wise statesmanship. But we have the freeholder—the bonâ-fide freeholder, upon whom alone the Constitution conferred the vote, and the faggot freeholder begotten by the Anti-Corn Law League and developed by an inevitable evolution into the favourite franchise of property and Jingoism. There can be no doubt but that the Forty-shilling Freeholder is a popular English tradition—that any attempt to slay it would arouse a good cry (in which ignorance would play the part of interest), and that under the flag of an ancient and yet democratic electoral right there would be, as Lord John found to his advantage in 1859, a compact gathering of all the foes of real reform. Why should we risk this? There must be very few cases where the bonâ-fide freehold is divorced from the residence upon which the new Bill would confer the vote. Non-resident freeholders will not pay their own expenses to vote. The Corrupt Practices Act has virtually disfranchised this class. Eldest sons and the small minority of freeholders who are not householders are not a class which we need fear, and in our principles are a class which though small is yet a step towards a fairer trial of the lodger experiment.

“ Faggot voters are indefensible. You, of course, ask me what do I suggest as involving ‘the least resistance,’ and as avoiding the greatest injustice.

" 1. Do not disturb any existing voter—strike no freeholder, forty-shilling or faggot, off the register.

" 2. Confine all new freehold qualifications to owners resident in the county (or division) in which they reside. If we can arrive at any reasonable solution of the freeholder, we shall limit the Bill to a very brief measure¹ and if the Government are firm and united, and are really ready at a crisis, as this is, to assert the pre-eminence of national legislation over private members' crotchets, we may at least pass one of the other two measures which Dilke announced. Pardon this incoherent scrawl from which you will be able to make out why I am not as yet prepared to go in for a simple residential franchise.

" Thank you very much for asking me to offer myself as your guest at dinner when next I am in London. I am hoping to come up in the 2nd week in January and if you are in town during that week, perhaps I may have the opportunity of expounding my theories and discussing the present position of affairs and of the party, all the aspects of which are not quite satisfactory to me.

" Yours faithfully,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

In December, 1883, between the two conferences, Mr. Chamberlain came to speak in Wolverhampton and stayed with us at Woodthorne. And at that meeting the then President of the Board of Trade paid the following tribute to my father: " In my friend Mr. Fowler you have given Mr. Villiers a worthy colleague. There is no Member in the House of Commons in the present Parliament who has made so distinctive a reputation, who has so completely gained the ear of the House of Commons. Mr. Fowler is known as an able, vigorous, clear debater, as an eloquent speaker, and he has won the esteem and consideration which I am bound to say the House of Commons always gives to distinct ability and all the more when, as in his case, that ability is placed at the service of honest purpose and conscientious motive. . . .

"I know no position which a man may fill with greater satisfaction and pride than that of representing those amongst whom he has passed his life, who know every action and all his public work, and who show their appreciation of it by the confidence which they repose in him. Mr. Fowler has made his mark in the House of Commons, he has illustrated the representation of Wolverhampton, and I think he has done as much honour to his constituency as his constituency has done to him. . . . And I have to recognize the great assistance which on many occasions, and never more so than in connexion with the Grand Committee on the Bankruptcy Bill, I have received from him."

Mr. Chamberlain here touched a note which always sounded loud in my father's thoughts. I mean the pride and pleasure he had in representing his own townfolk. It is true he was not a native of Wolverhampton, but all his manhood's life had been lived there, and all his public work had been done there. Mr. Chamberlain had himself ascended the same ladder from the platform of municipal life and with the experience of municipal apprenticeship, so he understood the full meaning of what the representation of a man's own town might be. Wolverhampton was never to Henry Fowler, as Birmingham was never to Mr. Chamberlain, only the step to political promotion. It was rather the soil in which his political powers were rooted and from which they sprang. No wooden platform from which to start, but a piece of living land to be enriched and beautified by its own product in the success of its representative, and to be dear to that representative as an integral part of his success. To represent one town, as both these statesmen have done, for over a quarter of a century, and that their own town, is an ideal experience of Parliamentary life which few realize, but in which both the place and the politician are equally blessed.

At this period Henry Fowler first expressed certain opinions concerning the rule of Ireland, from which he never departed. "If we are to have—and I desire to have—a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland—there must be equal laws, equal rights, equal privileges, one nation under one Sovereign. And until we are prepared to grant that in the fullest manner, without

reservation or hesitation to the people of Ireland, I bid good-bye to any and every scheme of legislation, whether it be coercive or beneficial, we can contemplate for the pacification of Ireland." "We have tried everything else and now let us try governing Ireland by the Irish people. Let us see if that will not secure to them what I think they are entitled to. If the Irish people felt that they were treated on precisely the same terms as the people of England and Scotland, and that they could make their voice heard equally in Parliament, I think that is more likely to secure their confidence than any system that could be adopted." This latter allusion was to the proposal to exclude from the extended franchise a large bulk of the Irish people.

In view of his future position with regard to India we may note here a few words of his concerning the Indian Empire. "He thought that the Liberal party quite understood Indian policy, that they valued the Colonial possessions of this country fully as much as did the Conservatives, and had done as much to retain them. He did venture the opinion that the best way to deal with our Indian possessions was to give the people as much self-government as possible and remove all disqualifications of race and religion. They wanted the people of India to understand and believe that under the Imperial rule of the Queen of Great Britain, and under the shadow of the English throne, they had a greater amount of liberty and privileges than they could enjoy under any other form of government." And he also gave the following description of his own Radicalism. At this time he was accused of being too violent a Radical; twenty years later he was accused of being far too Conservative for the Radical party; and yet he himself had never changed. His views, his policy, his ideals were all exactly the same, but the tide of Radicalism has flowed so far that the rock which at one time stood out as ahead of the tide, by and bye was engulfed by its progressive waters. It is safer, perhaps, for politicians to stand in a boat rather than on a rock—in these days the boats are crowded and the rocks are bare—but Henry Fowler never moved from his standing ground on the old Liberalism of the Victorian Era, and there are still many Englishmen left who wish that that rock had never been submerged.

"I am a Radical—I would pull up by the roots—that is what a Radical means—everything that is bad, and everything that is unjust and unfair, everything that mars the progress of our common country, everything that does injustice to any class or to any man. And I am a true Conservative—I would conserve all that is righteous and just and true. The policy of the party to which I belong has been the true Conservative policy. If at this moment the institutions of this country repose on a firmer basis than the institutions of any country on the face of the earth—if at this moment life and law and property are safer in Great Britain than they are in any other spot in the Continent* of Europe—if at this moment there is more individual freedom and a greater chance for individual industry—and if the throne of this nation stands surer than any throne on the face of the earth, all these things are owing to the Radical policy, which during fifty years has steadily upheld the rights of the people against the privileges of the few, and has endeavoured to secure the greatest happiness to the greatest number. . . . One of the articles of my political faith which I cannot rehearse too frequently is the Government of the people, through the people, by the people, for the people."

About this time a correspondence began between my father and his friend and confidant, Mr. John Morley (now Lord Morley), which continued, more or less, to the end of his life. They met so often, that the letters are of necessity not consecutive as a political correspondence, but are rather comments on current events, and a supplement to conversations of which there is no record.

"Woodthorne,

"Wolverhampton,

"5th April, 1884.

"MY DEAR MORLEY,

"Many thanks for your characteristically kind note. The only redeeming reminiscence of Thursday night is that you not only made an admirable and powerful speech, but the first (and the best) speech which has been made on our side, grappling with some of the difficulties (and there are difficulties) of the measure. So far as I am concerned it

was, of course, a great disappointment; I had carefully prepared!!! an argument, or something which wore the guise of an argument, and then to have to put it in the waste-paper basket! However, when I recalled that I had been nearly thirteen hours in the House—that I had a sleepless night—that I was physically out of sorts, and that for the last quarter of an hour of Plunket's speech I had assumed (as Goschen kindly arranged with me) that I was to move the adjournment and had therefore unstrung my mind from the debate; I am devoutly thankful that I was able to pull myself together, and that I did not utterly and finally break down.

"How is it that a Government which has hereditary traditions (to put it as mildly as possible) with 'below the gangway' should exhibit such an indifference, if not antagonism, to their successors in that inheritance?

"I see from one of the correspondent's accounts of Chamberlain's speech at the dinner of the National Liberal Club that he censured independent action which might break up the party;—so far so good.—But if the rigid discipline which he advocated is to be maintained, he must recall the lesson which the history of all great leaders civil and military must have taught him, that unhesitating, enthusiastic allegiance to those who command is the result of sympathy with and consideration for those who obey. H.M.'s Government may learn some truth from the fable of the Lion and the Mouse.—The 'to-morrow morning' of the fierce tornado of Gladstone's eloquence with its uprooted forest of Northcotean policy, presents a scene of destruction not of settled, intelligible, reliable policy.—The storm was superb while it lasted—the party and the country want a calm.

"Forgive me for this long talk.—I am staying over Wednesday to dine with Chamberlain on that evening.—If you are disengaged on Tuesday and have nothing better to do—the House won't be sitting, or at all events only for an Irish squabble—will you dine with me at the Reform?

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

In August he wrote :

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ Thanks for your kind criticism of my speech. It was extempore and delivered under circumstances of physical weariness and mental anxiety. Seeing the prospect of a good ending, I pulled up suddenly, omitting several topics on which I had wished to speak. You are right, I was (and advisedly) ‘ reserved ’ about the House of Lords. In addition to my own mental incertitude I found that my friends here were also uncertain. The leader, or rather one of the local leaders, of the party wrote a letter which was read ‘ deprecating abolition, but advocating the introduction of the elective principle.’ A strong section are of course for ‘ ending,’ but I am clear that in this constituency ‘ mending ’ is the policy most popular.

“ Your views as to the necessity of action in our section of the party are sound, subject (if I may say so) to modification as to time. In our married life whenever we have to decide any question of choice or preference from articles of furniture upwards, my wife has a good rule which I always approve—‘ First,’ she says, ‘ let us settle what we won’t have.’ Now apply this to our problem. The country won’t have (I am clear as to this) the unconditional abolition of the House of Lords. A Second Chamber meets with the approval both of practical and theoretical politicians—the impending democratizing of the House of Commons—its recent demoralization—its quick response to party objects and party triumphs—its ready acquiescence in the ‘ one man ’ rule—these, combined with other and perhaps sounder reasons, drawn alike from experience and probability, compel thoughtful men to see that some day, in some crisis, it may be of supreme importance to have the delay as well as the revision of a Second Chamber. And then Englishmen always do (I hope they always will) recognize the influence of tradition, association, history.—And the House of Lords has a history—the last fifty years, notwithstanding—and it has

capabilities. The machinery for power is constructed, the motive and the object are all that reformers need supply. Mind I am not saying this, I am photographing argument—prejudices if you like, which I feel sure vast sections and powerful sections of English society will adopt and fight for

“No! Lawson and Co. are wrong. The people will not now efface the House of Lords.

“If I am right in this prediction then we are confronted by the consequences of sitting on the other horn of your (already) classical dilemma—‘Mending,’ however you achieve it, means adding to the powers of the House of Lords, and to this Chamberlain, you, and most of us, are opposed. What is wanted ideally is that the majority of the House of Lords should be in harmony with the majority of the House of Commons—if the will of the latter majority could be effectively supported by a majority in another place, the difficulty to-day would be obviated, but this support could only be obtained at the risk, I think the certainty, of giving the Second Chamber a revising and consultative influence which might in the future develop into a power ‘behind,’ second only to that of the Cabinet. Are we prepared for that? I doubt the practicability of Bright’s scheme. If you want to prevent any increase in the legislative power and administrative control of the Upper House, is not the wisest plan to leave it as it is? You will say the Radical party cannot consent to that—and if they will point out the alternative, I agree. The upshot of my wandering scrawl is after all ‘mending.’ That must be a plank in our platform. I am declining all meetings at present, but before Parliament meets I shall have to make one or two deliverances. We (I mean the real, advanced Liberals) are advancing rapidly and surely; our danger is going too fast. Contrast the present Government, its personnel, its policy, and its acts, with any previous Liberal Administration—e.g., Melbourne (??), Russell, Palmerston (???), Aberdeen, Gladstone, and the enormous strides we have made are brought out into sight. It won’t

do to upset all this—to put the clock back ten degrees—to throw one-half of our party into the arms of the foes—in order to convince posterity that Labouchere and Storey and others are not the successors of Fox and Burke—of Cobden and Gladstone ! Forgive this disjointed scrawl.

“ Glad to say my wife is getting better.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

About a week later he wrote :

“ Woodthorne,

‘ 3rd September, 1884

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ What a cormorant you are of alliterative alternatives ! ‘ Improved or removed.’ Surely ‘ Mending or ending ’ was enough to make a reputation—and here you are taking the very bread out of the mouths of your humble followers, like myself, and we shall be driven to compelling or expelling, coercing or effacing, levelling up or levelling down, etc., etc. Never mind, the *Review* treads very skilfully over the thin ice, but its conclusions are right, and I think its predictions are correct. Midlothian ! complete success—the only weak point I can spot is the theory of ‘ What as to Egypt ’—that was not the theory of Dilke. But what I want to know is your theory of the What next after October. He won’t dissolve ; if they reject the Bill, what are we to do, or rather say ? A third sending up appears to be useless and derogatory to the House of Commons. Will the Queen create the Peers ? I doubt it—without a dissolution. With the House of Lords defying the House of Commons, and the echoes of those two great speeches ringing in the ears of the nation, what a chance we should have in a November election !

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

Again he wrote :

“ Chamber of Commerce,
 “ Wolverhampton,
 “ 30th September, 1884.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ Both my daughters want me to ask you for your photograph for their respective repositories of these works of art. It is a greedy demand, but as a sort of compromise (something like Lord Cowper's) I send my own as the House of Lords concession for your surrender! We had a good meeting at Wrexham. I came out strong about the unpatriotic attitude of the Tory Leader. The enclosed cutting shows that I touched the right chord. Of course I devoted the greater part of my speech to the Franchise and the House of Lords. I am sitting here in this Commercial Parliament and I have to do my share in that horrid function a public dinner this evening.

“ Yours very sincerely,
 “ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

“ Grand Hotel,
 “ Eastbourne,
 “ 11th October, 1884.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ My girls are greatly obliged to you for the two admirable photos which reached us here to-day.

“ At last we have got away to our holiday, but—(oh, those awful butts!) when my wife called at Charterhouse she found they were on the point of sending for her as our boy had let the nail of his toe grow inwards, and it was necessary to cut it out.—They thought that the operation had better be done under our own eye, so we brought him here, and last Sunday the little fellow endured the agony. He has got on wonderfully well, the foot is healing very rapidly, and he will, all being well, be able to return next week. But this was hardly a pleasant commencement of a holiday.

"The place is lovely, the hotel capital, and I wish the fates would drive you here to have a walk over these glorious downs and talk over all the complications of this week.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

"Woodthorne,

"Wolverhampton.

"MY DEAR MORLEY,

"Giving 'hints' to the junior Member for Newcastle as to a popular address is the aptest, completest and happiest illustration of the old proverb 'Carrying coal to Newcastle' that the most fertile mind could suggest

"But I will do what you so blindly ask for.—If I had to make a defence of the compromise—and at Leeds—I should, as my notes, sketch out the following :

"1. What did we at Leeds twelve months ago, ask for, resolve to get some day, hope to get out of this Parliament ?

"(a) Franchise.

"(b) Redistribution.

"Divided in time—inseparable in substance—both essentially necessary.

"2. What did we expect ?

"A protracted, bitter fight for the Franchise.

"A more bitter fight ending (as you said) in a Dissolution, before we could get Redistribution. But if every foe was defeated, we in our most sanguine dreams hoped for :

"1884.—Franchise.

"1885.—Redistribution.

"3. What followed our proposals ?

"The strong opposition of the Tory party in all its sections to our scheme.

"The cold support of our Whig allies.

"The fatherly counsels, and reproofs, and cautions, of some of our Leaders.

"The neutrality of a section of even the Liberal Press.

" 4 What have we got ? Franchise safe. Accepted, irreversible, both Houses, to all we suggested. Redistribution accepted on our principles of population, by Leaders on both sides, by public opinion. All danger of combination threatened by Members averted,—details only waiting to be settled, and the strong probability at least that 1885 will see our programme adopted.

" 5. What have the Government done ?

" They (at all events Gladstone, and we cannot deal with any other Leader) contended Franchise first only because Redistribution might otherwise be endangered, that Redistribution was kept back to prevent its being used to defeat Franchise, that subject to no danger on that score, Parliament was entitled to deal with Redistribution contemporaneously, that, if the House of Lords could pass Franchise, Redistribution should be at once brought in.—If this plan was resisted and Franchise imperilled, then, and only then, constitutional changes must be discussed. That was the Premier's position and now what has he agreed to ?

" Franchise Bill to be passed by House of Lords, and when House of Lords has accepted the principle of Redistribution the Opposition say, before we agree to this we must know what sort of a Redis. Bill you intend to introduce. If we (Opposition) regard this Bill as hopelessly bad then we will not agree and we will fight it out. Both parties are as they were. If we (Opposition) do not regard the Bill in this light, then we accept your offer and peace is made.

" Knowledge of the outline of the Redistribution Bill is the condition precedent to the treaty.

" The treaty, if agreed to, will require the absolute passing of a Franchise Bill, and the conditional passing of the Redistribution Bill, conditional, I mean, as depending on contingencies, which Government cannot control and from which the Franchise Bill is safe.

" 6. What was the alternative—Creation of Peers ?

" Dissolution to the existing constituencies ?

" Delay of all reform for years ?

“Tory Ministry”

“7. The passing by this Parliament of a complete scheme of Franchise and Redistribution,—a reform of priceless value for which true Liberals will postpone all other issues, especially issues on which this Parliament was not elected.

“8. Liberals should have the same confidence in Gladstone, Chamberlain, Dilke, Trevelyan, as Tories have in Salisbury, Northcote and Churchill.

“9. I should copy, and quote, and adopt, the admirable Newcastle sarcasm of schoolboys and savages, and protest against the degradation of a great party’s expressing and professing noble aims in the buffoonery of thoughtless wits, or the hatred of irreconcilables whose motives and whose principles are as much opposed to true Liberalism as they are to true Conservatism.

“There, my dear fellow, is a long text; you can preach the sermon. Send me (here) a Leeds paper with account of your meeting.

“I note your news as to C. Why don’t they put him into Otway’s place, but perhaps (and rightly so) he would think that a shabby evasion. If he goes out it is, I assume, to openly defend and maintain his principles.

“Yours faithfully,

“H. H. FOWLER.”

In 1884 Henry Fowler was appointed one of the two permanent members of the committee selected by the Treasury to devise means whereby certain expenditure could be reduced. And at this time his name began to be connected with almost every vacancy in the ranks of the Government, and he became first widely known to the public, principally through his powerful speaking at the Leeds Conference. It was evident that his days below the gangway were numbered. His amendment on the Franchise Bill was the only one accepted by the Government and incorporated in the Bill. It was also expected that Mr. Morley would be offered office, and the following letters indicated how the wheel was being watched for its next turn :

" Woodthorne.

" Wolverhampton,

" 19.11.1884.

" MY DEAR MORLEY,

" Caine's is a very good appointment both personally and representatively. He is an admirable and able man of business, a good financier, a good speaker, a good Radical, and has fairly earned the promotion by his great services to the party. Candidly he is a better man for the post than Duff or H. H. F.

" I don't like the commentary on Monday's Text which last night's debate in the House of Lords supplies. My contention was passing the Franchise Bill condition precedent to any and everything.—Now agreement, or shall we call it approval, of the House of Lords of the Redistribution Bill is the condition precedent.

" Was not this the contention of Lord Salisbury in July ? I don't like this private settlement of the Redistribution Bill between the Front Benches.

" If Chamberlain and Dilke won't agree to some ' vital ' point of the Tories, where are we ?

" If they do agree, and we below the gangway and the Irish dissent from their action, are we not powerless ?

" Some say that the details of the Redistribution are unimportant, and at first sight I agreed with them, but you will not be able to reopen this subject for years. The House of Lords (enormously strengthened by this conflict, as I think) will veto that, even if the House of Commons desired it, and the House of Commons representing existing arrangements, never desires Redistribution.

" Is it not of the last importance to us as a party to fight any Tory manipulation of the seats ?

" I purpose coming up to-morrow and hope to hear you speak to-morrow night.

" Yours faithfully,

" H. H. FOWLER "

“ Woodthorne,

“ 27th November, 1884.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ Thanks for your note. I am daily hoping that they will have the sense to offer you Shaw-Lefevre's place—and I am guessing that the place is being kept for you, until all chance of the compromise failing is at an end, so that when it is announced it will be too late for the Tories to put any construction on it and just in time to reassure the Left. I see the *Times* alluded to the probability of Courtney's resigning, but I suppose that until the Bill is actually introduced he is not entitled to say that he disapproves of it. I am glad Caine got in. It looks this morning as if there were difficulties in the negotiations—the Minority in Ireland is a problem.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

In November, 1884, Sir Thomas Brassey (now Earl Brassey), was appointed Secretary to the Admiralty in the place of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, and the position of Civil Lord of the Admiralty, vacated by Sir Thomas, was offered to my father in the following letter :

“ 10, Downing Street,

“ Whitehall,

“ November 5th, 1884.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ After a long service in the interesting Office of Civil Lord of the Admiralty Sir Thomas Brassey is about to become Secretary to that Department. I shall consider it a public advantage if we may be permitted to enlist your marked abilities and powers of speech in the service of the Crown ; and I hope you will allow me to submit your name to Her Majesty as the new Civil Lord in that great Department. I think you would find the Office one giving ample scope, especially at the present time, for energetic and useful

exertion. I need hardly say that for the present this proposal should be regarded as secret and I remain, my dear sir,

“ Faithtully yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

To which my father made the following somewhat remarkable reply, but one that showed that his ambition of office was not so much a personal one as for the rendering of effectual service to his country :

“•Reform Club,

“ Pall Mall, S. W.

“ November 6th, 1884.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th inst. and to assure you that I fully appreciate the honour which you have conferred upon me by that communication. However highly I may regard both politically and personally the privilege of joining the present Administration, I am bound, both in duty to myself and in loyalty to you, to consider my qualifications for the Office you name, and my ability to discharge its duties to the satisfaction of the public.

“ I am entirely ignorant of every branch and detail of Naval administration. I might say that I have to learn the alphabet of that department of the Public Service.

“ My training and my experience have run in a very different current.

“ Coupled with the clear conviction of my own incapacity I am aware, as every Member of Parliament is aware, that at this particular juncture it is absolutely essential that no charge of incompetency should be brought against any official responsible even in the most subordinate degree for Naval affairs.

“ To be placed in a post for which I am consciously unfit would be painful to myself and disadvantageous to the Government.

"Under these circumstances, and after the most careful deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to decline the proposal which you have done me the honour of making.

"Will you allow me to add that I attach a value which I cannot express to the distinction of being selected for any responsible post in the service of the Crown, by a Prime Minister for whom I entertain the most enthusiastic admiration and the profoundest respect, and that the decision which I feel compelled to make is consistent with my complete confidence in and independent support of your Government.

• "I am, my dear Sir,
"Yours faithfully,
"HENRY H. FOWLER."

In spite of the above letter, acceptance of the post was further pressed upon him by the First Lord of the Admiralty, but he adhered to his conscientious scruples about undertaking the work for which he felt himself unfitted. He wrote as follows to the First Lord:

"Reform Club,
"Pall Mall,
"12 November, 1884.

"DEAR LORD NORTHBROOK,

"After the most careful reconsideration I feel bound to adhere to the views which I expressed in my letter to Mr. Gladstone, and which, I explained to you yesterday, have been strengthened by reasons which had not occurred to me when I wrote to Mr. Gladstone.

"Believe me,
"Dear Lord Northbrook,
"Yours faithfully,
"HENRY H. FOWLER."

Remarkable letters surely to read nowadays for the reason of refusal. To know nothing about a Department, to have had

no special training for its administration, would seem a most inadequate, and almost absurd reason, for declining any advantageous post to-day. Modern politicians would smile at such an old-fashioned idea. And so we are all apt to smile at what is old-fashioned just because it is incongruous, and humour lies in incongruity; but nevertheless there was something fine, as well as uncommon, in such a humility, as well as in the desire to seek the good of the public service before the fulfilment of any personal ambition.

That year of 1884 finishes with another letter to his friend, asking him to come to Wolverhampton :

“ Woodthorne,

“ 24th December, 1884.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ When a merchant allows to be protested his promissory note he falls within the grip of Chamberlain's Act—his creditors are called together—his assets are distributed and he is not allowed to trade again until he obtains his certificate. Apply this politically, *e.g.*, Lymington's assets would pay 20s. in the £1, on any number of public engagements. Arthur Arnold's would be a sound estate paying a very large dividend—but in the case of the Junior Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne, having regard to the fact that his liabilities are limited (only two promises before the meeting of Parliament), I think from my knowledge of his assets that he can pay 20s in the £1, and if he allowed his notes to be dishonoured I think it would be a case of unjustifiable and culpable insolvency which ought to be reported to the Board of Trade. Joking apart, I do want you to come. I do not want you to come while you are at all seedy, or while you are enjoying your literary ease, and so I propose as late a date as possible. I find that Tuesday, the 3rd February, will suit our Working Men (it is a working men's meeting and as it was the working men who elected me and who will keep me in, if I am kept in, I am anxious to do them all honour); or if you prefer it, Thursday 5th. Kindly

drop me a line by return as we have to engage the Hall as soon as we can. The Meeting will be you and me. I shall take the Chair, and, say forty or forty-five minutes' talk will meet the case—so I am not imposing a heavy burden, and we will do all we can to take care of you at Woodthorne. I am strongly in favour of the Second Ballot; the sooner it is ventilated the better. Do you take it up—make it your own and get the credit of it. Why not start it by a letter to the *Times*? Lord Derby! but this jingo trash about German annexation is monstrous. What right have we to veto the development of Teutonic or Celtic or any other civilization.

“Surely the world gains if the cannibals of Guinea are civilized. And in my opinion the peace of Europe is safer if the great territorial powers undertake responsibilities and consequently develop weak points in all the parts of the world.

“Faithfully yours,

“HENRY H. FOWLER.”

CHAPTER XI

c 1884—1885

UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

"My country claims me all, claims every passion;
Her liberty henceforth be all my thought."

MARTYN.

JUST a month after my father declined the post of Civil Lord of the Admiralty he was offered the Under-Secretaryship of the Home Department, a post for which he felt himself trained and suited, and which he therefore gladly accepted. He received the following letter from the Prime Minister:

"Hawarden Castle,

"Chester,

"December 8th, 1884.

"DEAR MR. FOWLER,

"I am very glad to find our proposal that you should become Sir W. Harcourt's Under-Secretary of State has been agreeable to you. You will be at liberty to speak of this arrangement as soon as I hear from Her Majesty, and the earliest intimation of the event will be given you.

"Believe me,

"Most faithfully yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

The Secretary of State for the Home Department also wrote to him:

" Home Office,

" December 12th, 1884.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" The final official approval of your appointment only reached me at 9 p.m. last night. I telegraphed to you this morning that our secret need no longer be observed. I don't know how the announcement got into the papers,—everything does somehow. It does not signify in this case. I shall be in town till Wednesday next and shall be ready to introduce and induct you into the mysteries of the Office when you can conveniently come up. *I look forward with much pleasure and confidence to your valuable aid in what is at best a laborious and difficult task.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. V. HARCOURT."

Sir William Harcourt was my father's first Chief, and from the beginning he felt for him more than a usual affection and loyalty. The bond between them was always a close one, a personal as well as a political bond, and their reams of correspondence show how much they were subsequently in each other's counsels and confidence. Indeed it was to Sir William Harcourt, rather than to Mr. Gladstone, that my father gave his first, fresh, personal allegiance, and the devotion which a subordinate in a Department may feel for his direct Chief. This feeling soon spread, and afterwards matured into a friendship which not only included loyalty to, but also approval of, the then Home Secretary practically throughout his career.

The position of Under-Secretary to the Home Department was not one in which men came to stay. It was rather one of the recognized stepping-stones in the Government, and since the Administration of 1880 was formed had been occupied by Mr. Arthur Peel, who became Speaker, Lord Rosebery, who was shortly afterwards appointed first Commissioner of Works, and Mr. Hibbert, promoted to be Secretary to the Treasury, in which office he was succeeded by Henry Fowler in 1886.

On becoming Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department it was necessary for my father to break his connection with the Town Council of Wolverhampton, of which he had been a member for twenty-six years, but which was controlled in a measure by the Department of State to which he had been appointed. He wrote to the Mayor as follows :

“ Woodthorne,
“ Wolverhampton,
“ 5th January, 1885.

“ DEAR MR. MAYOR,

“ It is with unaffected regret that I have to request you to inform the Town Council that my recent appointment as Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department necessitates the resignation of the Office of Alderman. Wolverhampton has been incorporated thirty-six years, and for twenty-six years of that period it has been my privilege and my pleasure to be a member of the Town Council. My intimate association with the municipal life of Wolverhampton has strengthened my confidence in our system of self-government, and has increased my appreciation of the character and conduct of the citizens by whom our local administration has been, and is being, conducted. Let me ask you to convey to my colleagues the assurance that I shall continue to sympathize with them in all their endeavours to promote the good government of the borough, and that I shall always be ready to render them any assistance in my power in the discharge of their honourable and responsible duties.

“ I am, dear Mr. Mayor,

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

At a dinner given shortly afterwards by the members of the Liberal Club in Wolverhampton in celebration of the Jubilee of Mr. Villiers in its representation, Henry Fowler spoke for the first time as a Member of the Government. He expressed his

satisfaction that he had been able to follow the constituency's precedent to have for their Member a Front Bench man, and he expressed afterwards—and often afterwards, at home—his further satisfaction that the opponents to his candidature on the ground that Wolverhampton wanted a Front Bench rather than a local representative, had had an unappetizing meal off their own words. He also at that dinner referred to the breaking-up and dividing of the great borough of Wolverhampton into three constituencies.

"I deplore," he said, "the mutilation of the borough of Wolverhampton. I must not say I object to it, because I suppose Members of the Government* must support everything that the Government may do. But, so far as it is within the limits of orthodoxy, I say I do not like the breaking-up of the great borough of Wolverhampton. And such an event as has been celebrated to-day—this fifty years' connection between Wolverhampton and Mr. Villiers—honourable to Mr. Villiers, more honourable to Wolverhampton; far more honourable to the people who have sent him than to the man sent—I am sorry this representation of the borough is to be one of the things of the past. But whatever may happen, I shall myself regard it, so long as I have any connection with Wolverhampton, still as a whole." Here again the note is struck, which sounded so loud even throughout all his reforming passion and policy, of regret at the destruction of any of those great monuments of power or tradition which come to us out of the treasures of the past. A possible present good may clamour for, and even compel, such destruction, but it would always be with the greatest reluctance and regret that Henry Fowler would consent to it; and so cautious was he about sacrificing a positive good for a theoretical improvement, that he would never have been instrumental in originating such a policy. The elements of the optimist and the speculator were absolutely lacking in his character. He must see a practical good put down on paper—"in black and white" was the test he used to quote; but never in the colouring of enthusiastic imagination and idealization, even though those colours might be absolutely true to what would happen. This quality had, as all other qualities have, its defects. It often

held him back from attempts which he could easily and worthily have achieved, but it also tempered his Radicalism with a sobriety and security which are admirable leavens in such a lump. Moreover, he had a very real sense of the danger of even friendly divisions. "Unity is strength," was one of his favourite maxims, and he would have sacrificed much to keeping intact the unity of anything which was strong and powerful, and of value. The shadow of that great destruction and division of the Liberal Party which came with the Home Rule Bill of 1886, perhaps fell across his picture of the destruction of one of its great borough constituencies. To neither did he openly object, but both he deeply deplored.

At the close of this speech he touched on a vein of thought which was always singularly abhorrent to him: "It was the young men of 1835 who have fought and won the victory; and future victories will depend upon the young men of to-day, if they do not drink in that most contemptible of all contemptible snobbery—the belief that it is more respectable and more gentlemanly to belong to the Conservative party. I think when a young man has descended to that level, has degraded himself down to that point, he should take off his hat and vanish into insignificance in the presence of any respectable working man; he has forfeited all the value of his education, and he has himself abdicated the position of intelligence and propriety which his father earned for him. I would not say—I have no patience with, but I have no respect for, these juvenile apostates. I do respect an honest convert, I even respect a conscientious pervert; but the man who leaves his political or religious faith because he deems it to be more gentlemanly to belong to somebody else's, whatever other demands he may make upon his fellows, cannot claim their respect or their confidence."

In the days when Henry Fowler made this speech that sort of snobbery was far more rampant than it is to-day. There will probably never come an age before the Millennium when snobbery of some sort is not rampant, but it wears different guises in different generations. I think my father had met with a good deal of this particular kind, seeing that he had changed neither his political

nor religious views, in the midst of a circle which thought and acted otherwise. But to him, personally, as a man made of big qualities, as a man descended from godly and gentle forbears,—for it is only in the radius of real religion that snobbery can find no standing-room—the popular failing was more ugly than wrong, but so ugly that he hated even to look upon it. He had little patience with folly of any kind; fools he never suffered gladly, and pretenders of any sort he would away with. He keenly enjoyed the story of the man who regretted his wife's death which happened "just when she was getting into society"; for in the last quarter of the nineteenth century there were social smallnesses which people to-day would only laugh at. Conventionalism is being swept away, and much that is good is going with it; nevertheless, it was a cramping and a petrifying power which hindered growth and froze originality. In Henry Fowler's day it was the fashion to be a Churchman and a Tory—to-day it is the fashion to belong to any religion that is newer than the established creeds, and consequently an improvement upon Christianity. It doesn't much matter what it is, provided that it is new and unorthodox. Politically the fashions of to-day are past finding out,—there are few old Tories, and no old Liberals, and a sort of setting-to-corners has taken place which involves joining hands on many questions with those who belong to the other side. My father had a conventional character but not a conventional mind. He belonged to the days of mahogany and rep, and other such well-wearing materials, but his mind had been bred and moulded in one of the early Methodist homes, from which conventionality had been banished when the new faith came in, and he never had any dealings with the language and limitations of conventionalism, even though his thoughts and feelings were of that conventional type which was characteristic of the great Victorian Era.

But though he shrank from the division of the borough of Wolverhampton, it was perhaps with some of that maternal solicitude which, in the presence of King Solomon, shrank from the mutilation of a much-loved child, and it was not because he disapproved of the Government's great work in the redistribution scheme. At Liverpool he said of it: "The Franchise Bill had

swept away one of the obstacles to popular progress, and the Redistribution Bill would very shortly sweep away another. Now the Liberal principle that numbers and not interests, that men and not money-bags, that the people and not classes, are to control the distribution of political power and regulate Parliamentary representation—I say, that principle has been accepted in a degree, and to an extent, which the reformers of the last generation only regarded as the possibility even of a very distant future. I know, and acknowledge, and rejoice in the acknowledgment, that an electoral reform which cast into the shade the electoral reforms of 1832 and 1867 has been accomplished by the mutual action of the Leaders of the two great political parties; and that changes which, if they had been proposed by one party and resisted by the other, could only have been adopted after a long and bitter national struggle, have been carried into law with mutual consent and with mutual concession. . . . A democratic Government may be foolish, but it can never be irresponsible; it cannot in its folly trample on the conscience or the feelings of a great people. To my mind it will be peaceful, but it won't be cowardly; it won't bully but it won't submit to bullying, it may not be diplomatic, but it will be honest, it will say what it means, and mean what it says; and although it will not wantonly lavish English treasure or sacrifice English lives, it will never allow the interests or the honour, or the subjects of this Empire to be sacrificed at the bidding or for the aggrandisement of any foreign foe." Such was Henry Fowler's idea of a democratic Government in the days in which he thus spoke of it. And to such an idea of Liberal Government, and only to such, he held his allegiance, and in it he confided his trust. The idealist can be made of different fibre from the dreamer. Henry Fowler could see visions though he never dreamed dreams; and, as the most practical and utilitarian of men, he yet held ideals of his party and its principles, and its policy, which were as real to him as ideals always are to those who truly believe in them. In all his exposition of his Government's actions he had some high motive and big thought to portray, which were ever present in his own interpretation of such actions, as most probably they were in all the other Ministers with whom he was connected; and it

was this power of seeing into the heart of things,—and as a matter of fact it is generally in the heart of things that we find their best,—which made him so fair and understanding an opponent, so wise a counsellor, so true a friend. As a fair opponent a whole party recognized him, as a wise counsellor his country valued him, but of him as a true friend only a few can bear their testimony. One of the brightest bits of colouring in his portraiture was his loyalty to his friends. “What is the good of a friend who won’t stick up for you when you are in the wrong? All the world will do so when you are in the right.” And he also not only adopted, but appraised the sentiment of the adage, that “one man may steal a horse and another not look over the gate.” The man who was Henry Fowler’s friend could steal a whole stableful unrebuked. I never heard him speak one disloyal or even disappointed word of a friend. He had a perfect manufactory of excuses for the same, should they in any way fail him; and his powers of forgiveness, should injuries be proved, were of that rare type which can literally forgive and forget—the latter being generally the crucial difficulty.

As far back as this year of 1885 he foreshadowed his views on the desirability of a multiplication of small holdings when he pointed out: “That one quarter of England and Wales is owned by 710 men, 744 men own one half of Ireland and 70 men own one half of Scotland. I say there is not such a state of things in any other civilized country on the face of the earth. In France, in Switzerland, in Germany, in Austria, in Holland, in Belgium, in Italy, small estates are multiplied. In England small estates are vanishing away. In Prussia alone there are 800,000 agricultural labourers who are owners of the soil, and in France you will find millions of men all holding less than ten acres. I am not unfamiliar with the cry that anyone proposing any change in this respect is at once charged with interfering with the rights of property; he is at once a communist, a socialist, and very shortly will be called a nihilist. I do not believe we are going to break the Eighth Commandment; would it be any breach of it—any violent interference with the rights of property—supposing we abolish that iniquitous law by which all one’s land goes to one

child ? Would it be a breach of the Eighth Commandment if you swept away the cumbrous machinery of entail ? Would it be a breach of the Eighth Commandment to make land as merchantable as cotton or corn, or to secure to the farmer that his outlay shall be as certain a property as the land on which he labours ? Would it be a breach of the Eighth Commandment to say that land should pay a fair share, of the rates from which it is now exempt ? . . .

“ Whatever ugly names you may attach to the new order of things, depend upon it that the day has gone by for the preservation of a vested right to do wrong. We could not if we would, and we would not if we could, arrest legislation, which I believe will invest English citizenship with a loftier character than ever attached to the citizenship of Rome. The industry and the co-operation of the masses of the people have created a marvellous wealth, which puts into obscurity the magnificence of the princes of times past ; but the conditions under which that wealth has been created have caused an enormous amount of human suffering and of human want. It is our duty to mitigate that suffering and that want. No legislation can abolish poverty, but legislation can do much to mitigate the suffering which exists. I do not believe in the perpetuity of ignorance and intemperance, of cruelty and of crime. I do not believe that our nation has grasped the first principles of political economy, to say nothing of moral justice, if the life of the majority of its citizens is one prolonged and bitter struggle from the cradle to the grave, divorced from every association that can refine or elevate humanity. I believe that by wise and strong legislation, health may be preserved, education may be extended, physical suffering may be prevented, recreation may be secured, and life made a virtue,—a noble and a happy thing. The true test of national greatness is not in your ships, or your colonies, or commerce. It is not in your ascendancy in the Councils of Europe or in the world-wide limits of your Empire. It is in the prosperity, in the happiness, in the physical well-being of the masses of the people committed to your charge.” And again he spoke of law reform at the Fowler Reform Club in Wolverhampton : “ Property in land rested upon the same foundation, and was

entitled to the same protection, and ought to be subjected to the same obligation, as every other description of property. By law and by custom we had attached to land artificial privileges, exemptions and disabilities opposed to the public interest. The law had discouraged the multiplication of the proprietors of land, and treated limited ownership on the largest scale as the perfection of modernized feudalism. Taxation had been graduated so as to exempt property in land from the same burdens which all other property bore. It was neither communism, nor confiscation, nor unsound finance, to ask that land should be treated on the same footing, be subject to the same taxation, and enjoy the same freedom of sale, as every other description of property."

On February 4th, 1885, Henry Fowler made the following reference to the War in the Soudan: "Whatever might be their opinions as to the past or to the future policy of the Government, with regard to the Soudan, he thought Englishmen of all parties and of all ranks would unite in admiration of that splendid feat of arms which those brave men accomplished in a march of two hundred miles across the desert, of meeting a foe ten times their number, fighting two battles and proving that they were what Englishmen had always been;—that was a defeat which deserved the admiration of the whole country." But as regards the policy of that war he added: "As Liberals they were not prepared to weaken our present vast territory; they were fully sensible of the responsibilities which it involved; but at the same time the one-third of the globe over which Queen Victoria reigned was sufficient for the greediest ambition. The British Government had the care of three hundred millions of the human race, and that was sufficient to tax the uttermost resources of English statesmanship. Africa was five thousand miles long and five thousand miles wide, and yet, no sooner did a great Continental Power show itself desirous of colonizing a few hundred miles of it, than there was a great outcry that our Colonial Empire was in danger. England was desirous to see other nations engaged in the work of colonization and civilization; and, if they did so, it was not likely to prejudice British territory in any way. He for one was not in favour of weakening our present territory, but he thought they were but doing their

duty by confining it to its present limits, and respecting the rights of others. Five years ago the country had pronounced its verdict, that as it would not have annexation in Afghanistan, or Zululand, so it would not have annexation in North Africa. As the Liberal party they would uphold the principle that the best interests to look after were the interests of peace. Private individuals had at times to make sacrifices to avoid quarrels and litigation, and nations ought to make sacrifices to avoid war."

On February 6th, 1885, he wrote the following somewhat gloomy letter to Mr. Morley :

" MY DEAR MORLEY, .

"No adequate report of my speech, which was a poor one, has appeared. If to-morrow's paper has anything worth reading I will send it. The taxation difficulty is great. Of course you know Mill's views. My inclination is (as I told Chamberlain) to follow out Mill's theory of non-payment up to a certain figure. Mill puts it at £50—our law at £120—I should not be sorry to see it at £400. That would give the real relief to the section of the Middle Class most deserving of relief and on whom the tax presses with unfair severity. What we want is a complete and statesmanlike revision of our whole Imperial and Local Taxation. The present theory is that the Working classes pay two-fifths and the Welsh ditto classes three-fifths of Imperial Taxation. Your speech at Glasgow will have the weightiest effect. If I was not a Member of the Government, and could therefore speak disinterestedly, I should entreat you to throw your enormous influence against any party—(Tory party, Peace party, Labouchere party, Bondholders' party, Goschen party, John Morley party), action, or reproach, at so grave a crisis. The Queen's Government, as such, is entitled in a moment of supreme difficulty to the support of the nation; and whether you are right, or Lord Edmond, matters very little just now. 'I told you so' is what the Tories will say. Let them say it in due course, but not now in the face of such a disaster. I am very down about politics, and about the Liberal party.

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Here we are disintegrated, and I can see we are losing ground rapidly. The folly of splitting up our Borough is apparent. The Tories talk of winning two seats. If so, you can see who goes to the wall.

"Wishing you a good time at Glasgow,

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

There is no record of any expression of his opinion concerning the Fall of Khartoum, and the death of General Gordon, the news of which reached England on February 5th. Such silence may be significant of a latent disagreement with the policy of the Government at that time; but as he was not in the Cabinet, his voice could not with propriety have been raised on any such question, and as he was in no way responsible for the policy, his obvious course was a non-critical one, whatever might have been his private opinions. Politically he practised what he often advocated personally: "If you have nothing pleasant to say, be silent." And silent on this occasion he markedly was.

But from that date the days of the Government were numbered. Their swinging majority had dwindled down to the bare one of fourteen on the vote of censure, and every subsequent question seemed to widen the differences which existed even within the Cabinet itself, but with this we have nothing to do, seeing that at this time Henry Fowler was only an outside subordinate of this moribund Administration. On June 10th the Government was defeated by a combination of the Irish with the Opposition, and also by the addition of many Liberals who had differed essentially from recent policy. Though England is not a sentimental nation, it has a great underlying stratum of sentiment, and this, whether rightly or wrongly, had been stirred up by the tragedy of the massacre of one of England's truest heroes, which she felt might have been prevented had other policies prevailed. The enthusiast whom one section of the world calls a hero and the other a fanatic—the truth often lying in the amalgamation of the two,—is rather a doubtful asset in political life; he may even prove to be a liability; for the hero can only see the best, and the politician

can only deal with the second-best, and there is no meeting-ground for the policies of these two. But the great third party of public opinion, is subordinate even to that of public sentiment, and when the latter is let loose, no King Canute is powerful enough to stay its tide.

It was on the Budget, however, that the Government was actually defeated, and it was with facts rather than theories that Henry Fowler characteristically concerned himself.

"There was a good deal of confusion, misconception and misrepresentation as to why Mr. Gladstone's Government—the Government which had so large a majority, and which no doubt represented a majority of the old constituencies—was brought to so sudden a close. It was not Russia, it was not Egypt, it was not Bechuanaland, it was not foreign policy, it was not twopence on a bottle of brandy, it was not a halfpenny on twelve pints of beer, it was not the intolerable condition of the taxation of this country, that compelled the House of Commons to turn the Government out; but he would tell them what it was. It was because the Government invaded the sanctuary of the landed interests, it was because they proposed that real property should pay its share of the taxation of the country, that Mr. Gladstone, like Mr. Pitt a hundred years ago, was defeated by a landlord Parliament, in making precisely the same proposals, under precisely the same circumstances." And again further: "It was a combination with Irish members for Irish purposes, although the issue was nominally a Budget one, which terminated the Gladstone Ministry." But once in later years in considering some question which involved a relief expedition I heard him say: "The Liberal party can afford no more Gordons."

Lord Salisbury formed a Government, and went to the country in the autumn dissolution of 1885, in which the Liberals retained sufficient seats to form a majority with the Irish, but not enough to be independent of the Irish party. This was the first election of the divided borough of Wolverhampton. A good deal of local pressure had been brought upon my father to contest West Wolverhampton, as the most uncertain portion of the constituency, but he was firm in his decision, after Mr. Villiers had chosen the

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South, to contest East Wolverhampton, on the ground that it practically represented the original Parliamentary borough of Wolverhampton—the Western Division having sprung up only in recent years by the extension of villadom, and having with it no political associations. And these were ever dear to the heart of Henry Fowler. As Mr Villiers chose the South because in it, at Bilston, he made his first speech as a Parliamentary candidate, so did the Junior Member cling to that heart of the old borough which comprised Willenhall, the town which so many years ago had expressed a desire, and a resolve, to have him as its Parliamentary representative. His opponent at the election of 1885 was Mr. Walker Bird, whom he defeated by a majority of 1,287 on a poll of 6,583.

On Mr. Morley's return for Newcastle my father wrote :

“ Woodthorne,

“ 30th November, 1885.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ No one outside your own family is more delighted at your victory than I am. Accept my truest sympathy. I saw in the papers the dirty tricks that your colleague was alleged to be playing, and I feared the result,—and I am proportionally relieved at the result. What a catastrophe all round !! I won't utter the folly of 'I told you so,' but do wish that the counsels of more moderate advisers had been listened to. '*L'audace, encore l'audace, et toujours l'audace,*' you remember what you said followed. Last chapter of 3 vol. of Greville (new series) describes the elections of 1852 and the condition of the Liberal party in words literally accurate if applied to 1885. I am thoroughly depressed—cannot pull myself right. Party here quarrelling and split up ! Again and again wishing you many successful 'returns' and anticipating even in the dim and distant future your accession to your rightful and right honourable inheritance,

“ I am,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

It was a difficult campaign for the late Government's allies to conduct. There was no popular cry, but there was a good deal of unpopular criticism. There was some thin ice to be skated over, and the Liberal programme was stale even if it was convincing. Ireland pressed heavily, as was its wont, on the hearts and consciences and spirits of politicians, and the Irish party, returned to Parliament—85, Parnellites strong—waited for the opportunity to reduce either party to subservience to its demands, seeing that it held the majority at Westminster in its hands.

The Liberal majority over the Tories was 82, but the Irish practically held the situation in their hands, as the side to which their 85 was added was bound to prevail. The parties returned to Westminster were uncertain as to which way the Irish vote would go, and therefore Lord Salisbury remained in power for the next couple of months, until the Chief Secretary for Ireland—Mr. Smith—proposed a Coercion Bill, when the Irish seized the first opportunity of showing their disapproval of that measure, by voting against the Government on Mr. Collings' amendment regarding the omission from the Queen's Speech of measures for benefiting the rural labourer.

Sufficient time had not elapsed to efface the differences between leaders of diverse Liberal opinions, and so the return to Westminster of the Liberal party was sombre and half-sullen, waiting in the spirit of disunion for the actual opportunity, which swiftly and but too surely came.

CHAPTER XII

1886

SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY

"Dissolutions of ancient amities ; divisions in state."—SHAKESPEARE.

LORD SALISBURY'S Government was defeated on January 27th, 1886, by a majority of 79, composed of Liberals and Nationalists ; and on Monday, February 1st, Mr. Gladstone again kissed hands as Prime Minister. On February 3rd he wrote to my father :

" 21, Carlton House Terrace,

" February 3, 1886.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I have now to propose to you that you should become one of the vigilant guardians of the public purse, as Financial Secretary to the Treasury. I hope it will be agreeable to you to accept this important office. It will be under your old chief, as Sir W. Harcourt will be Chancellor of the Exchequer.

" Believe me,

" Sincerely yours,

" W. E. GLADSTONE."

To which my father replied :

" Reform Club,

" Pall Mall, S. W.

" 3rd February, 1886.

" DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

" I have to thank you for the honour you have done me in proposing that I should undertake the duties of Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

"I accept the office with a due sense of the importance of the trust you have reposed in me, and with the determination to do my utmost to discharge its responsibilities to the satisfaction of yourself and the public.

"Believe me,

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

The post of Financial Secretary to the Treasury was supposed to be the last step before entering the Cabinet. True there are some men who never ascended by any steps at all, but went up by a lift into Cabinet rank; not so Henry Fowler. He walked every step of his way through life. Sometimes, when the way was hard, and the progress slow, he looked with a silent longing at the luck of other men, but luck never came his way. As Financial Secretary his duties involved the general conduct of Government business in the House, besides the transaction of all affairs negotiated between the Treasury and public bodies throughout the country; the post also involved a continuance of the tie between him and Sir William Harcourt, which was one my father greatly valued. But to embark in any office just at this period was with no long or safe voyage ahead. All the dry bones of Irish wrongs and needs in times past seemed to have had suddenly breathed into them the breath of life, and arose as a host to press the Government into some practical response to their appeal. Some think rightly, some think wrongly, the veteran Prime Minister turned no deaf ear to that imperative demand. He saw the dangers, possibly he even saw the destruction, of his party ahead, but he was never the man to flinch from consequences. He deliberately drove the ship on to the rocks, and the Liberal party was cast into the sea—some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, came to land, but, alas! there were many that were lost.

My father's attitude on the Home Rule question, and in that great controversy, has been the subject of much subsequent doubt and discussion, but his own words tell us clearly what his convictions really were, and explain his conduct throughout. He was a Home Ruler, before ever the subject assumed such critical pro-

portions, and he never departed from his convictions, even though many thought it would have been greatly to his advantage to have done so. But there was a certain apparent half-heartedness in his enthusiasm for Home Rule, which those who felt the pulse of politics were quick to realize, and which has been the cause of many doubts expressed since concerning his attitude. He believed in the principle of Home Rule, but he also believed in the possibility of buying some things too dear. He thought that the question, with its momentous issues, was rushed; and beyond everything he regretted the break-up of the Liberal party as its price. And in after years, when he saw the sacrifice which that price involved, and knew that it had bought nothing, then he may have expressed in public, what I have heard him often express in private, that the payment of that price was a huge and deplorable mistake.

A prominent Liberal Member speaking in the session of 1886, said: "There were only three men on the Treasury Bench who were Home Rulers before the last election, and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury was one of the three."

And speaking at Wolverhampton before the election on November 11th, 1885, Henry Fowler told his constituents: "That his judgment was, that subject to maintaining, as he should always maintain at all risks, the integrity of the British Empire, Ireland ought to have conceded to her as much Home Rule as the Legislature possibly could concede." And on May 1st, 1886, in alluding to Mr. Chamberlain's resignation, he said: "He should always speak in terms of the greatest respect of that statesman, although he had seen it his duty to leave the Government because he did not approve of some important details of the Irish scheme. Whether they differed from, or agreed with, this statesman, he had deserved well of the advanced Liberal party, and would, he believed, continue to do so; and he was proud to call the Member to whom he referred his friend." And then he went on to say, in recalling the history of the past few weeks: "Mr. Gladstone had in very flattering terms to himself offered to submit his name to Her Majesty as Secretary to the Treasury. He had to ask himself, before accepting that office, whether he was prepared to support

Mr. Gladstone in what he believed to be his Irish policy, and whether he was acting consistently with what he had professed to his constituents. Mr. Gladstone asked him for no pledge whatever, but every man who was about to join the Administration clearly understood that he was going to join an Administration which contemplated dealing with the Irish question. It had been said of a great many members of the Government that they abandoned the pledges they had given to their constituents; and that, he would not say for the sake of office, but for party considerations—under the guidance of their Leader—they were prepared to alter their views. He could speak for himself; and so far as Wolverhampton was concerned, to that statement he gave a distinct denial. His own view on this Irish question had been forming for years; he had expressed that view to them before they elected him, and as it was better that they should be strictly accurate in these things, he would read an extract from a speech he made at the General Election in which he expressed his views on Ireland. ‘As far as I can form an opinion, the views Mr. Parnell is propounding are the views of a vast majority of the people of Ireland, and I ask, are we to carry on a permanent conflict, not with the Irish representatives, but with the Irish people? I have come to the conclusion that we cannot do it, and that the permanently forcing Ireland, with large masses of military policemen, and a large army of soldiers, and by the suspension of the constitutional rights of the people, and by the present centralization of Dublin Castle, will not be tolerated. What is to be done is not a matter to be decided upon in a moment, but no change can be for the worse. Without pledging myself to details, I would say, that, subject to the maintenance of the unity of the Empire, the supremacy of the Crown, and the final authority of the Imperial Parliament, Ireland ought to have conceded to her as much Home Rule as the Legislature could concede to her. I believe Irishmen to be capable of managing their own affairs, and, as constitutional Englishmen believe in the government of the people, by the people, for the people, I hold that the principle that is good for England will be good for Ireland. I long for the day, no matter under what Government, when the whole question of the internal

government of Ireland will be grappled with in a broad, statesman-like manner, and with a firm determination, not only to do full justice to the people of Ireland, but to recognize to the full what some people might call sentiment, and what I should call national feeling.' Well, he thought he stood before them with clean hands. He had neither receded nor advanced from the point he stood on that night, and the opinions he then expressed; therefore his acceptance of Office was in strict harmony with the pledges he had given to his constituents. So much for his position; but they had to ask themselves as Englishmen, how was it that in 1886 these proposals should have been submitted to the country which had caused alarm to wise, thoughtful and prudent men, and why was it when they had got to this point that there was a necessity for a radical change in the government of Ireland? His first answer was, that we had been trying to govern Ireland for eighty-six years in our own way, and had failed. During those eighty-six years, fifty-two times had Parliament been called upon to suspend the constitutional rights of the people of Ireland, and during seventy-three of those eighty-six years—only thirteen on the other side—the Irish people had not lived under the same laws as the English, and had not been entitled to the same constitutional rights, but had been subject to repressive and coercive legislation, more or less stringent, according to the times in which the measures were passed. We had tried remedial and coercive measures, under different political parties, and different modes of administration—the result had been in every case total, absolute failure. The next point was, what was the state of Ireland to-day? Last year they had extended the franchise to the householders in Ireland, and the result was that five-sixths of their Members—eighty-six out of one hundred and three—had been returned in order to claim the right of the management of their own affairs in their own way. If they did not believe in constitutional government this argument had no force; but he did believe in it, and he believed the expression of the wish and desire of the people, through their representatives, was the constitutional mode. A man was deliberately blinding his own eyes if he believed that the majority of the people of Ireland were not in favour of a change in the direction to which

he had alluded. But there was another question which affected them as well as the people of Ireland. Out of one hundred Members elected by householders, eighty-six were followers of Mr. Parnell. He would ask, had England got Home Rule? We had a deadlock. Our representatives could not do what the electorate of this country had said was absolutely essential to the prosperity of England, and why? Because the Irish difficulty stopped the way. They had eighty-six Members, moving with the regularity of machinery at the will of one man, and if they were acting on the avowed purpose of preventing us from doing our work, did the electorate think we should get the reforms that were wanted? In looking at this question he took first the failure of our past system; secondly, the expression of the opinion of the Irish people; thirdly, the deadlock to which our own Parliamentary institution was brought."

The description of the bringing forward of Mr. Gladstone's Bill is thus given in my father's own words: "He should never forget, and he supposed no one who was there at the time would ever forget, the scene in the House of Commons on the evening of April 8th. He thought that that was an event in the history of our country which men might stop to look at, even if they did not approve of the scheme which was then developed. That great man, nearly seventy-seven years of age, with the civilized world waiting to hear the words that dropped from his lips in that august assembly, crowded as the House of Commons had never been crowded before. There in the galleries were the representatives of the Sovereign and the Royal Family, the nobility, the foreign Ambassadors, the great Cardinal, who so wonderfully and ably represented in this country the Roman Catholic Church, the most distinguished men of the literary world, the great leaders of public opinion in the Press, and a fair amount of the rank and file of English educated opinion—all listening with the most profound absorption to that wonderful man, who for three hours and twenty-five minutes exercised such a marvellous power over that assembly, that he did not believe one single man moved from his seat during the time that powerful and masterly speech was being delivered. Whether the policy propounded that night was wise or unwise, he

thought they would agree that it was a grand attempt by one of England's greatest statesmen to deal with one of England's greatest difficulties."

For himself, he judged that this Bill did satisfy the three conditions to which he had pledged himself when he stood as a candidate for Wolverhampton—the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and the final authority of the British Parliament.

"The central idea of the Bill," he went on, "the foundation upon which the whole superstructure was built, was the granting of a legislature to Ireland for the management of her own affairs. That legislature was to consist of two bodies, two persons, two authorities. First the Queen supreme ; second the legislature. And Her Majesty would have the same prerogatives with respect to the summoning, the proroguing and the dissolving of this body, as of the English Parliament. Therefore they had the Queen the head of the Executive Government, they had the veto of the Queen upon all the actions of the Parliament, and last of all they had this very important clause, which provided that it shall not be lawful for the Irish legislative body to adopt or pass any vote upon any resolution, address, or bill, for the receiving or appropriation of any part of the revenue, or any tax, except in pursuance of a recommendation by Her Majesty, expressed through the Lord Lieutenant. If the Bill were passed, the Queen would be as much the Queen of Ireland as she was before."

Concerning the unity of the Empire :

"They felt that though they were prepared to concede much to Ireland, they were not prepared to concede anything which would impair the unity of the Empire, and in reference to this, Mr. Gladstone had stated in effect, that if there were any conflict between the concession and the unity of the Empire, then the unity must prevail. At the present moment the integrity of the Empire was preserved by all imperial questions being controlled by the Imperial Parliament, which controlled alike the military, naval, civil, colonial, and commercial policy. There were many separate subjects which the Irish could not touch, and a great deal depended upon them, and a right understanding of this part of the question, because, if the Bill was going to empower Ireland to deal with all

matters at present dealt with by the English Parliament, he for one would vote against it. He would tell them what these subjects were, and leave them to judge whether there was anything beyond mere domestic questions left in the hands of the Irish body.

" They could not make laws relating to the status or dignity of the Crown, or the succession to the Crown, or Regency. That preserved the unity of the Crown.

" The making of peace or war. There was the Imperial grasp upon the great questions of peace and war.

" The Army, Navy, Militia, and Volunteers or the defence of the realm. In other words the absolute control of every soldier, sailor or volunteer is left in the hands of the Imperial Parliament. When people talked to him about separation he asked where was the force to come from to effect separation ? When they had the power of the Army of a country he thought they had the control of the country itself, and that key unlocked most doors.

" Treaties or other relations with foreign States or between the various parts of Her Majesty's dominions. Thus there is no foreign or colonial question which could be taken out of the hands of the Imperial Parliament

" Dignities or titles of honour. Reserving the power of this to the Sovereign alone and thus preventing corruption.

" Prizes or booty of war.

" Offences against the Law of Nations, or offences committed in violation of any treaty made, or hereafter to be made, between Her Majesty and any foreign State ; or offences committed on the High Seas.

" Treason, alienage or nationalization. The Irish could not alter the law of treason. The essence of treason was a direct attempt at separation—it was bringing war against the Crown. This body in Ireland would have no power to deal with it, and if any body of men in Ireland were foolish enough to raise the standard of separation, they would be amenable to the English law, and would be dealt with accordingly.

" Any commercial matters.

" The postal and telegraph service, except the transmission of letters and telegrams in Ireland

" Beacons, lighthouses, and sea-marks.

" The coinage, the value of foreign money, legal tender of weights and measures. There was no disturbance of the unity of the Empire on that important point.

" Copyright, patent rights, or other exclusive rights to the use or profit of any make or invention.

" Therefore, the English and the Irish would still have their inventions as carefully protected as if this Irish law had never been brought forward.

" The establishment or endowment of religion. Some people said that if the Bill passed they would have a Roman Catholic Church established in Ireland—but they would not.

" The free exercise of religion. The result of this would be religious freedom. The Irish legislature could not make any laws imposing any disabilities, or conferring any privileges, on account of a man's religious belief. They had not got to that in this country yet.

" Abrogating or derogating from the right to establish or maintain any place of denominational education or any denominational institution or charity. This being a distinct enactment for the protection of the Protestant minority in Ireland.

" Prejudicially affecting the right of any child to attend the school receiving public money, without attending the religious instruction of that school. That prevented either the Roman Catholic or Protestant child from being compelled to have religious instruction to which its parents objected.

" The power to levy duties or to interfere with free trade or to grant bounties of any kind.

" He thought that those were pretty sweeping reservations, all tending to the preservation of the unity of the Empire, but the Bill went a little further. The English not only had the power to do certain things but the Irish body had to pay something for what they got. They would have to contribute to national, military, naval and other expenditure incurred for Ireland. The Royal Irish Constabulary, which was practically a military force of fifteen thousand trained soldier-policemen, would be subject, not to the control of the Irish Parliament, but, as heretofore, the Lord Lieutenant as representing Her Majesty.

"With all these subjects excluded it seemed difficult to discern what was left for the Irish Parliament to deal with.

"It would have the power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Ireland just as any municipality made laws for the peace, order and good government of the people committed to its charge."

As regards the final authority of the Imperial Parliament he further explained :

"The Imperial Parliament which made the legislative body for Ireland, could also unmake it. And if Parliament saw that the Act was working badly, or not producing the results hoped for ; if it embarrassed us, or threatened danger, the power which created could also destroy. Moreover, all matters in which it was not competent for the Irish legislative body to make or repeal laws, shall remain within the exclusive authority of the Imperial Parliament. He thought that precaution had been taken that the Irish legislature should be confined entirely to internal legislation for the people of Ireland." With regard to the dangers of the Bill—"and there were dangers," he acknowledged, "external and internal—there was a class of people who said that if you do this now it will only be an instalment.—The people will not be satisfied with this but will want something else. That was a kind of argument he could never see the force of ;—to say that a man must not do right to-day, because some day someone else will ask him to do wrong. Let them deal with that matter when they were asked to do wrong. If they assumed that Ireland would demand separation, he would ask how was it to come about ? How could the Irish set up or pay for an army of their own ? Ireland was a poor country and where was it to get the money for such a purpose ? And this was always supposing that we were going to sit still and see it done. We were Ireland's nearest and most powerful neighbour, and its best customer. Would Ireland destroy itself, ruin its own trade, and imperil its best interests for the purpose of setting up a separate kingdom ? If ever they did, the people of England would say—' You shall not. We have dealt rightly with you—put you upon a level with ourselves, and with our Colonies, secured you freedom, prosperity, independence and

self-government ; if you rise up against us and attempt to destroy us—then we will arm ourselves in self-defence. If you appeal to the arbitrament of force we will appeal to it, too,—but not till then ! ’

“ We were told that there would be foreign complications, that it would be a source of weakness in dealing with foreign Powers, but could anything be weaker than that at present, when there was a chronic antagonism to us among the Irish in America and our Colonies, who were dissatisfied with our rule in Ireland ? Would it weaken us in the eyes of our Colonies and America if we were strong enough to do right ?

“ There was an internal danger, and a source of difficulty in Ireland owing to the division of that Isle into two great faiths—Protestant and Roman Catholic. England would take care that neither was trodden under foot by the other. Two wrongs would never make one right, and although we had in the past, in our treatment of the Roman Catholics, acted unrighteously, he trusted that those days of ignorance, bigotry and oppression had gone by. He had no sympathy with the man who tried to raise a religious controversy on this question. We were bound to protect the minority, and in granting this system of self-government we should guard their rights. The Bill proposed certain safeguards for the protection of the minority, and if they did not meet with the approval of the people in Parliament, then let them be made stronger and better than they were.

“ The question of the exclusion of the Irish Members was one of great difficulty, and he hoped the means might be found by which a fair and just representation of the Irish people might be retained in the Imperial Parliament.

“ Why were they anxious to give to Ireland different institutions to what they gave to Scotland and Wales ? Because we had never treated Ireland and Scotland the same in the past, and it was too late to begin now. There were the differences of race, of religion, and of education ; and the geographical division of the Channel constituted abiding differences between the two countries, which justified the Irish in demanding, as they had demanded for the last century, a distinct political life, which he thought would

be to their advantage—a distinct political life which the people of Scotland had never asked for, and did not want, and which, if five-sixths of the people of Scotland were determined to have, they would have had in a much shorter space of time than eighty-six years.

“What was the alternative? They could govern Ireland by military force—they could exclude the Irish Members from Parliament altogether, and that was an absolute necessity if they were to govern Ireland by military force; they might introduce such a scheme for the purchase of Irish land which would throw the present scheme into utter insignificance. But did they think that this was a policy which the people of this country would allow to be carried out? He did not. He did not believe the English people would sit still and have another Poland close to their doors. Were we to rule in the nineteenth century, with our boasted constitutional government, and parliamentary life, and civil and religious liberty,—were we to govern one of the kingdoms of Her Majesty by bullets and bayonets—expel her representatives from the Imperial Parliament, and put Ireland under the hoof of military despotism? English people would not tolerate it for a moment. They would not crush a nation's life out by the sword. He believed this Bill would confer great advantages on the people of Ireland, and on the people of Great Britain. He believed it would cement the two great countries, and render their real union far more lasting, far more binding, far more sacred, than anything that could be enforced by military rule or coercive law. He believed it would restore to our own Parliament more freedom to be able to do the work that English people wanted to be done; to the Liberal party it would give more freedom in their work of progress, and it was his hope and anticipation that he should be able better to represent his constituents when this difficulty was done away with.”

As Financial Secretary to the Treasury my father was then the Minister responsible for all Public Works in Ireland, and that fact to him was a practical argument in favour of local administration, seeing that he felt himself utterly unacquainted with the details of Irish life, and out of touch with her local concerns.

The die was cast, and great issues hung round the historic division on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. The split was threatened, and it was a split to the roots. During that momentous meeting of the malcontents, who were to decide whether they would merely abstain from voting and stay the schism, or whether they would vote against the Bill and destroy the Government, which was being held on May 31st, Henry Fowler was speaking in the House itself, to which Lord Morley in his *Life of Gladstone* thus alludes: "One of the best speakers in the House, though not at that time in the Cabinet, was making an admirably warm and convinced defence alike of the policy and of the Bill while these proceedings were going on. But Mr. Fowler was listened to by men of preoccupied minds."

The policy of the Government was, as we have seen from the above long explanation, in accordance with my father's own convictions, though he was ever too cautious a man to venture great risks. But means and methods were not for him to discuss. As outside the Cabinet he had no part or lot in those disastrous decisions. What he had to do, and all he had to do, amid that maelstrom of conflicting opinions and confounding deeds, was to settle with his own political conscience what was the line of his convictions and then to be loyal to the same. He had, as we have seen, approved of the principle of Home Rule—he had taken fresh pledges before his constituency to support that principle, and in the deeper study of his character and detailed record of his life, the reader will see how certain it was that he would be a Home Ruler, as expressing that spirit of self-government which was so marked an article of his political creed. His joining the Government was the declaration that he was a Home Ruler, and when a Home Rule campaign was compelled, after the defeat of the Government, no man's voice rang clearer or more convincingly in favour of the broken Bill than did Henry Fowler's. But a sense of loss and sadness in that mortal division of the Liberal party oppressed him throughout it all. He was young in Ministerial life—he looked forward to a great stake in Liberalism; and as perhaps a wreck is a worse catastrophe to the man who has set sail on his first voyage, than to the veterans who have travelled the

whole course over, so my father mourned this wreckage with the full bitterness of a heart and hopes that were young. He was quite human enough to feel the personal loss, too, which it wrought in his career, for the days of even partial healing were slow and the Liberal party was only in office again for three years during the next twenty years which were the practical span of Henry Fowler's active Parliamentary life. He did much with those three years; he was too great a statesman and too fair a man, to let his disappointment dim his efforts or quench his zeal; but the shadows of the might-have-been clouded the whole of his subsequent career, and Ireland and her policy had cost him too much—had cost, in his belief, the whole Liberal party too much—for him ever quite to forgive her, or the Bill, which had wrought such irrevocable loss.

Had he been false to his convictions, had he been disloyal to his Chief, Henry Fowler might have reaped a far fuller harvest from the many fat years than from the few lean ones, but to be either would have been out of drawing with his whole character. Pressure was brought to bear upon him, but such pressure was futile with a man of his make. The essential principle of Home Rule was one of his principles, and therefore he was bound to uphold it, even though he believed that the time was not ripe, and the pace was too forced, for the staking the whole fortunes of a great party on the passing of this one measure by the Imperial Parliament.

The story of that disastrous division on the morning of June 8th has been told elsewhere. The last appeal was made by the veteran Prime Minister to the party which he had led for so long,—and it was refused. Ninety-three Liberals voted against the Bill, among whom were several of his colleagues, and the leaders of a mighty following in the country. The adverse majority was thirty, and the Bill was lost. But not only the Bill. There was lost on that memorable occasion the great strength of unity in the Liberal party; there was lost the historic confidence which had cemented a party to its leader; there was lost many a time-tried friendship, and many a political and personal bond. The marks of that havoc still sear the remnants of the old Liberalism; and though new parties are born, new leaders risen, nothing will ever

restore that which was lost when Mr. Gladstone led his party, after so many glorious victories, to its last great defeat.

On the eve of the General Election, after the Government was beaten, and before its resignation, Mr. Gladstone wrote to my father :

• “Edinburgh,
“20th June, 1886.

“MY DEAR FOWLER,

“I am happy to propose to you, with the sanction of the Queen, that you should be sworn of the Privy Council.

“This honour is tendered to you after a period of service in the offices you have held, that is unusually short, in acknowledgment of the great abilities that you have displayed in the service of the Queen and of the State.

“I remain,

“Sincerely yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

To which the following reply was sent :

“Treasury Chambers,
“Whitehall,
“21 June, 1886.

“DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, informing me that Her Majesty had been pleased to direct that I should be sworn of the Privy Council.

“I have always regarded this honour as one of the highest rewards which any public servant could receive, and I gratefully accept it in the hope that I may prove myself not unworthy of this great distinction. The fact that this honour has been conferred on your advice, and for the reasons which you so kindly intimate, invests it with a special pleasure which I can never forget.

“Believe me,

“Yours faithfully,

“HENRY H. FOWLER.”

The two following letters of congratulation he treasured all his life :

" 20, Devonshire Place,
" June 21st, 1886.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" We are quite overjoyed at the news you have sent us. We are filled with gladness and pride at this crowning honour. May God bless this to your good as well as happiness. •

" Yours lovingly,

" ELLEN FOWLER.

" ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER.

" EDITH HENRIETTA FOWLER.

" HENRY ERNEST FOWLER."

" 95, Elm Park Gardens,
" 24.6.86.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I am suddenly called off to Newcastle, so must write to you the warm and hearty congratulations that I meant to have offered you face to face. I was delighted to see the announcement. It is as pleasant to me as an honour to myself. You richly deserve it, and that is the best of all. I wish you all success.

" Ever yours,
" J. MORLEY."

Of all the good things that he worked for and won I do not think any gave my father so much pleasure as his Privy Councillorship. He often quoted the words that it was the 'blue ribbon' of political life, and it possessed in his case the double value of being quickly given. For all his other honours his periods of service were so long and so arduous, and in such cases the greatness of joy is somewhat staled. To strive beyond one's strength, to look forward till eyes and anticipations are strained, rob a reward of most of its charm, even though its worth remains untouched.

CHAPTER XIII

1886—1887

HOME RULE

"Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
Then on the height comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply ;
Lightnings dazzle our eyes :

Alas,

Havoc is made in our train !
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left !—
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On—and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks ;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks,
Whom in our party we bring ?
Whom we have left in the snow ? "

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE General Election of July, 1886, was, of course, fought entirely on the Home Rule question, and it was the principle rather than its details which Henry Fowler tried to press on his constituency. He frankly owned that there were points in the Bill to which he took exception, but he urged that it would be absolutely impossible, unless a Ministry were omniscient or inspired, to have brought in a Bill which would not have been assailable at some point or other. But that if only the principle were

conceded, then it might require not only a second, but even a third or a fourth scheme, to deal with the practical details. The main difficulty, which he confessed, was that of the retention of the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament, and though he expressed himself as distinctly in favour of that retention, yet he also thought that no adequate solution of that great difficulty had been suggested in the Bill; and that it would require "the deepest thought, the most careful consideration, the greatest discussion, the most complete thrashing-out" before any satisfactory judgment could be obtained. "It would be," he declared, "a calamity—nay, an impossibility—to exclude the Irish representatives from the Imperial Parliament, but how it should be carried out was a question which would require the assistance of their wisest and best statesmen to decide when they had the point before them." With reference to the fiscal part of the scheme propounded he was a strong advocate of fiscal unity, though he frankly said that the fiscal arrangements were capable of very great improvements.

So he plainly put it before the people that the Bill itself was no verbally-inspired document which could be regarded as a sacred whole. It was merely a human, and therefore a faulty, scheme—but it was the first scheme which had been put down in black and white—showing how Irish autonomy could be carried out; and if the constituencies were convinced of the desirability of the same self-government in nationalities as in municipalities, then what they had to do was merely to pronounce on the principle, and leave the details to those statesmen to whom they entrusted the working of all their political machinery. And not only in this case, but in all political questions, he was of the opinion that the part of the general public lay in pronouncing on the broad lines and leaving the technique to experts. He would smile at the very confident opinions so surely expressed, of men who know nothing of Parliamentary technique. "You are ill, and your friends see that you are ill, but to whom do you go for the remedy? To your friends or to the doctor? It requires a close and full training to write a prescription—and not only in medicine but in politics is the trained expert needed." And as life is built up

upon trust ; as we first trust our parents and then our teachers—as we trust our interests and our business and our health to our fellows, so we can surely trust them with our policy. Such trust is the foundation of our constitution as well as the basis of our characters. To this trust Henry Fowler ever appealed. He was himself so worthy of it, and he believed so implicitly in its un-failing power. “ He was not,” he said, “ one of those who attached such overwhelming importance to unanimity of opinions on all matters of detail affecting the action, and the administration, and legislation of the Liberal party. He thought one of the distinguishing characteristics, one of the chief excellencies, of the Liberal party ought to be, and, he believed, was, that there was a free play of individual opinion, and that they were not all bound rigidly to accept any formula from which they must not depart, without losing their place in the estimation of their fellow-Liberals and appearing to disturb the unity of the party.”

The principle of Home Rule he tried to impress upon them was not a new one in Liberal or even English politics. “ We had sympathized with all the struggling nationalities of Europe. We had held out the right hand to Italy when Italy was struggling, and we were very fond of telling the great Powers that the only way to restore order was by giving the people free institutions, and we had carried out the policy ourselves. A few years ago there was not a more disloyal and more discontented portion of the British Empire than Canada. There were two provinces, different in race, different in religion, different in soil, different in language. But a great statesman said, the way to cure this evil was to give the Canadian people, who had recently broken out into rebellion, the right to govern themselves. The same arguments were used ; the same argument about breaking up the Empire, the same argument about the Roman Catholic majority and the Protestant minority—the same argument about the difference of races, the same oratorical disquisitions about the disruption of the Empire ! But we have done it—Canada had Home Rule given to her, and she was now the most loyal and contented portion of the British Empire. Canada did not get Home Rule because she was loyal, but she was loyal and contented because she had Home Rule.

The Liberals would not be party to any scheme which was not safe for England, and no scheme would be worth the paper on which it was written, unless the Irish people were prepared to accept it as a full and lasting settlement. The Union, which was made eighty-six years ago, united the Parliaments and divided the nations; they wanted to divide the Parliaments and unite the nations, and they believed*that union, the shaking-hands between the two great democracies, between the two peoples, would unite and knit together the hearts of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Greater Britain and the Greater Ireland which were beyond the seas—would unite them in a common attachment, in common loyalty to our illustrious Queen and*in common citizenship to our great Empire.”

But England was not ready for Home Rule. The great Unionist party, comprising the Tories and the Dissident Liberals, obtained a majority of 110 in the House of Commons. In Wolverhampton Henry Fowler was returned by a majority of 1,123, his opponent being Mr. J. Underhill, Q.C.—only 164 less than at his election earlier in the year. The Conservatives polled within 20 of their last number, but of course there were considerable abstentions. “English people cannot make up their minds in a hurry,” said Henry Fowler. Possibly in modern days he might have modified that statement.

It is notable that the new Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer lost no time in securing Henry Fowler’s services, which were ever, in Office and in Opposition, at the command of his country.

“ Treasury Chambers,

“ Whitehall,

“ August 31st, 1886,

“ DEAR FOWLER,

“ The Government have decided to appoint a Royal Commission to examine into and report upon the state management and cost of the Public Departments of the State. I would be glad to know if you would authorize the First Lord of the Treasury to submit your name to Her Majesty as one

of the Royal Commissioners. The Government are extremely desirous that the Commission should be assisted and strengthened by your great knowledge and experience of the public service, gained both from an official and a parliamentary point of view

“ Believe me to be,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.”

The Home Rule war did not end with the General Election. An organized campaign began, in which Henry Fowler took no small part. Within the remaining few months of the year 1886, he spoke at large meetings at Leicester, Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield, Louth, and in London; and before the anniversary of the July election he had also spoken at Bristol, Accrington, Dundee, Perth, Nottingham again, and other minor places.

The disruption of the Liberal party was a fact, but it was hoped, not a final one. Henry Fowler was one of the men who always hoped for reunion, and his fair comprehension of opposing opinions, the non-bitterness of his tongue and temper, rendered him one of the few, who could, had it been possible, have effected a reconciliation.

But it was to the ex-Cabinet Ministers that these delicate negotiations were entrusted. Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Herschell, Mr. Morley and Sir George Trevelyan met in the Round Table Conference, and at first the hope of peace waxed strong. The first fires of fierce recrimination had burned low. During the past few weeks Henry Fowler was one of the most eloquent advocates of reconciliation and reunion. During this critical time he kept up a flowing confidential correspondence with Mr. Morley on the state of affairs. In October he wrote :

“ Woodthorne,

“ 22nd October, 1886.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ I very much approved of Rosebery's speech. I think he hit the safe medium—holding out the olive branch

and not hoisting the white flag. The only point I disagreed with him on was as to time I do not think that is, as the lawyers say, of the essence of the contract. Delay is in our favour and in favour of reunion. Reunion is in the air. We are not the irreconcilables. Men of common sense know that knocking under is not the road to settlement. Statesmen discover solutions which disputants may honourably accept. I am not sure but that the English Land question may not prove the rock on which Lord Randolph will wreck the ship. The *Times* to-day discerns that the Highbury programme will not cement the union of the Unionists I adhere to sitting still—that is our strength, not abuse or recrimination. Admit, as Rosebery does, our defeat—ask for the alternative acceptable and winning policy—reserve our attitude as well as our comments—d disdain the *onus probandi, scribendi, loquendi*—and our time of criticism, of counsel, of co-operation and of victory will come. There is a piece of optimism from a very gloomy pessimist.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

A week later :

“ Woodthorne,

“ 28th October, 1886.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ In discussing (as I have no doubt you will) in the council at Hawarden the currents which are at present influencing the party I think you must not assume that the rigid attitude of Rendel and Arnold (whom you rightly termed ‘ representative men ’) predominates. Arnold abandoned the *non possumus* before he left your house! I am satisfied that there is another current, not of surrender but of desire to maintain your principle unimpaired, modifying its details. This is not either pro Hartington or pro Chamberlain, but is the result of the position of our own men in their own boroughs and counties, affected by, and influenced by their

old friends and supporters. They naturally and wisely wish to conciliate important sections of the local party who, agreeing to Irish Autonomy, disliked some of the provisions by which Mr. G. proposed to effectuate it. A stiff unyielding policy—the Bill, the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill, won't do, and I think would risk another secession. I am not now arguing for, or against, these views, but every conversation I have had since the election with politicians in and out of the House, convinces me of the strength and force of the supporters of reconciliation based upon modification of our essentials. All I wish to say now is, don't ignore this feeling. See Sam Smith's speech at Hawarden the other night—and Smith was a guest at the castle!

“May I make another suggestion, or rather comment, on the suggestion that the Unionists may oppose all Liberal action which might defeat the Government? Don't let us assume this—don't let us make the *descensus Averni facilis*. Let us assume that all Liberals (whatever their views on Irish affairs), will resist any retrogressive legislation—any sham settlement of pending questions—any and every anti-Liberal proposals. And if the Unionists commit the blunder of fighting Liberal principles, because Tories are fighting them, let them have all the difficulty of announcing their own apostasy—let the shock come without any preparation or breaking of the ice—and the blow, however it may strike, will have a recoil of a more fatal character. Forgive my boring you with this scrawl, but it is the meditation on our pleasant party, and you can take it for what it is worth. Harcourt and you going to Hawarden will give to your utterances at Leeds a responsibility which cannot be minimised.

“Yours faithfully,

“HENRY H. FOWLER.”

At this point a sudden and unexpected crisis was wrought by the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the Conservative party in the House of

Commons. So big a blow left so large a gap, that an easy way was left open for the Liberal seceders to come home, even though by doing so they would have to cross to the other side of the street. But neither Lord Hartington nor Mr. Chamberlain joined the Government. The former refused Lord Salisbury's offer of the Premiership, and Mr. Chamberlain was at that time negotiating for what seemed then a possible reconciliation with his own party. Mr. Goschen joined the Ministry and filled Lord Randolph's empty place.

• " Woodthorne,

• " 23rd December, 1886.

" MY DEAR MORLEY,

" And so the first eruption of Vesuvius has discharged itself—the secret must have been well kept, as there has not been a Cabinet for some days. I gather from the tone of the article, and also from the difficulty of retracing a step so publicly taken, that his lordship means going. What then? Hartington? No—he cannot, as it seems to me, serve under Salisbury, and he cannot take anyone with him except the Duke and Heneage,—James and Trevelyan could not join the Tories. Goschen? Yes, if he is wise, and the Tories are wise—the Exchequer and the lead of the House of Commons are worth his purchase, and now or never is his time. He has parted company with the Liberal party—far more completely than Burke did with Fox, and he might reconstruct a moderate Conservative party, a sort of diluted Peelism with a bitter flavour of political economists. Randolph studies precedents—Disraeli was defeated (1st time) in December. Palmerston was dismissed at Christmas and he in three months dismissed Lord John. *Absit omen* may the Tories say.

" I am in the desert here, and if you know anything and can find time to send me a line I shall welcome it as an oasis. I must, in wishing you the compliments of the season, congratulate you on the brilliant success of this year. Twelve months ago you were below the gangway, now you are one of

the foremost, most popular, most trusted leaders of the Party, after having discharged with signal ability and success the duties of the most difficult post in the Cabinet. I doubt whether our political history has any parallel for so swift, so sure, so well-deserved a rise. The future of the Liberal party will (if your life is spared), be coloured, influenced, controlled by you. And in that light, as well as in the brighter light of personal feeling, I wish you and yours all the good wishes and good hopes of Christmastide.

“Yours faithfully,

“HENRY H. FOWLER.”

To which Mr. Morley replied :

“I am really touched by your generous words about myself, my dear Fowler. I won't weigh them, but will only say how much I hope that you and I have much close and unbroken co-operation before us. That is one of the compensations of public life.”

A few days later my father wrote again :

“Woodthorne,

“27th December, 1886.

“MY DEAR MORLEY,

“I agree with you as to the importance of J. C.'s speech, and it is because I regard it as of supreme importance in the present crisis of the party that I (on the Bank Holiday) bore you with my views of the situation.

“1. Take the present status. We cannot in this Parliament carry our Irish policy or any section of it. In case of a dissolution we must win sixty seats to obtain a bare majority of the House of Commons. A vital constitutional change cannot, ought not to be carried by a bare majority of the House of Commons. The House of Lords would decline

to surrender its own convictions without a summons emanating from the vast majority of the electors. The conflict must therefore go on until (as I believe would be the case) the electorate by a resistless force carried Irish Self-Government—the ultimate victory being *ex necessitate rei*—modified by concessions on detail to secure its peaceful working.

“ 2. Take Chamberlain’s proposals.

“(a). Land Settlement. This Spencer and you are pledged to the point to regard as an essential preliminary to Home Rule.

“(b). Complete local democratic Government—re-arranging and popularising all the internal administration of Ireland; and all this irresistibly tending to and strengthening Home Rule, while laying a practical foundation on which to rear it to the satisfaction of the British Elector.

“(c). Then he and his friends are willing to consider whether they cannot go further.—Note—not we are to consider whether enough has been done. And side by side with this, the reunion and vigorous action of the Liberal party in departments affecting England, Wales and Scotland.

“ As practical politicians we are bound to consider (apart from past vexations) his proposal. It is a basis. I have reason to know that he desires peace, and that, if he is met, he will respond. I feel sure that the rank and file of our own section will as a rule (of course there will be exceptions) look favourably both on his programme and on his proposals, and a *non possumus* will be a blunder of the gravest character.

“ Of course you will say, how about Mr. Parnell? Will he consent to any delay. Yes—if he is wise;—and if he is unwise how can he prevent delay? He cannot overturn the Tory Government, and he cannot control the English Electorate. He knows as well as we do that the agrarian difficulty is the key to the whole situation, and with the help of the Chamberlain section that may be grappled with. He

also knows that extended Local Government is the safest ladder by which to reach the tableland of complete autonomy. But if he is unyielding, we are not bound to commit suicide because he takes an erroneous view of a most complicated political problem. Our policy, our duty, is to do the best we can; and without compromising our convictions or our resolutions, to moderate our pace to the stern necessities of the case. Some one should see Chamberlain, and the most suitable man, as it appears to me, is Herschell.

"If Salisbury had the pluck, he would face Lord Randolph's loss with the remark that 'this is one Tory the less', fill up his Cabinet from his own party (Ridley is far superior to half the Cabinet), take his stand on Tory principles and dare the disunited Liberal party to do their worst. But I suspect behind all this there is a war policy. Churchill scented it, and wisely washed his hands before it was too late, and here I fear Hartington and the Whigs—their sympathies are with the services—and with that miserable accursed will-o'-the-wisp—a spirited foreign policy.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

"Woodthorne,

"29th December, 1886.

"MY DEAR MORLEY,

"I have to-night to speak at a banquet given by our Club in honour of Mr. G.'s birthday. In this district where the greatest interest is taken in J. C. and in everything he says, and where his opponents in the Press and in the party have regarded his speech in the most hopeful view, I must allude to the 'olive branch.' I shall not discuss nor comment upon his proposals—I shall treat his action as (and I believe it to be so) dictated by a desire for reunion, and shall intimate my hope that his overtures will receive friendly consideration. I have just received a long letter from Jesse Collings—he says he has written in a similar

strain to Harcourt, who, I doubt not, will show you the letter ; —I cannot send you mine to-day as I want to read it very carefully before I reply. He is for peace, but I discern a difference between him and Chamberlain. Collings, as I understand him, is for suspending Irish legislation—this is out of the question. Chamberlain, as I understand him, is at once for Land, Local Government,—Home Rule short of legislation and the reconsideration of Legislative Body. Of course the real power is with J. C. and with him Gladstone and you must deal. I am satisfied that he wishes a reconciliation—as to terms, that is another question. In the meantime I don't think Hartington will join the Government. But is it outside practical politics that Hartington should concur in J. C.'s proposals, and be ready to work on those lines ? I agree with you as to the dissolution—we should gain. Unionists would lose—Tories might gain, but the balance would, I think, be in Parnell's hands.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

At this time many turned to Henry Fowler in their hopes for a reconciliation. These pages show that it was not his fault that such was not effected. Many were the letters he received about it, such as the following letter from Mr. Jesse Collings :

“ Edgbaston,

“ Birmingham,

“ December 27th, 1886.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Before the last dissolution of Parliament, I wrote you a memo. of my view of the situation, and the probable results to the Liberal party of an appeal to the country on the Irish scheme of the Government. The fears I then uttered, unfortunately for the peace and unity of the party, came true. As we are probably near another appeal to the country, I

should like to say a few words again on the state of affairs, as I think the present moment is the one in which it is to be decided if the breach is to be healed or made permanent. I have written to Harcourt on the same lines as I am writing to you and have told him that I am writing to you on the subject. I take it for granted that no real Liberal likes the present state of affairs—excepting always Labouchere, and other mountebank politicians and doctrinaire Radicals. The resignation of Churchill changes the position completely. It forces an opportunity on us in which—according to how it is used—the Liberal party will be reunited or be confirmed in its disunion. I take it for granted that Lord Hartington will not think of joining a Tory Government. In this case Lord Salisbury's true policy will be to force a dissolution. If the Liberals have to fight a General Election on the Home Rule platform I have no doubt they will be badly defeated. It is immaterial whether or no the Unionists will suffer more than the other section; the fact will be seen that Lord Salisbury will come back with a majority large enough to keep him in power for years and the Liberals—unfortunately as I think for the country—will be in the shade for a like period. I know this view will be disputed, but I am nevertheless certain it is correct. In saying this I give due importance to the Home Rule meetings, and other manifestations, which have been taking place throughout the country. The meetings of the Federation are all that could be desired from a Home Rule point of view, but the Federation is an instrument not understood by those who at present direct it. When we were inside it we always directed its action and framed its resolutions, with a view to secure the concurrence of the large classes of Liberals (the non-demonstrative, stay-at-home, non-thinking, arm-chair, timid, etc., etc.) without whose support and votes, in spite of appearances, success was impossible. These classes are not only numerous but all-important, on account of the influence they use, and the votes they command in their several localities and surroundings. The Federation ignores these classes, treats them with contempt, and would even

rule them out of the Liberal party altogether. Besides these a large number—a much larger number than is supposed—among Radicals and the working classes are opposed to the Irish scheme of the late Government. Altogether I conclude that Home Rule as a platform would receive far less support now than it did at the last election. I have as large a correspondence as most men on this subject with friends and foes, from all parts of the country, and it all confirms these conclusions. In England, as far I know, all ideas of special reforms have had to grow into the proportions necessary to make a distinct scheme for such reforms successful. The Home Rule scheme was put suddenly before the country. It has, I believe, seen its greatest success for the time, and whether it be right or wrong it must now be subject to the usual discussion and growth before it can be placed as a platform before the country with any chance of success. The question remains what is to be done? Mr. Chamberlain has what is called ‘held out the olive branch.’ Is there anything to come of it? Are the leaders of the Liberal party going to make any response? Are they going to let the thing drift under the direction of Labouchere and Co., or are they going to give it a guiding hand? It seems to me that, what is wanted is to recognize the logic of facts, to admit that for the present at least, the country has declared against Home Rule; and to agree to set that question aside and unite on a platform composed of the other great Liberal questions on which all are agreed. If one or two prominent men—say you and Harcourt, were to adopt this view, I am sure it would be received with gladness by thousands of good Liberals—supporters of the late Government—who are above all things sick of the present state of affairs, and are only waiting for a sign of this kind to be given. This is evident from the fact that Chamberlain’s advances have been received favourably in quarters where it was hardly to be expected. If fairly and earnestly presented to Mr. Gladstone, I hardly see how he could refuse for the sake of reuniting the Liberal party. At any rate now is the time—perhaps the only time—for trying

what can be done. It seems madness to complete the disruption of a party, with so many strong points of policy in common, for the sake of one point on which agreement for the time seems not to be possible; and which if selected as a platform at a General Election, must certainly bring defeat. If the course indicated could be followed, I believe that in a General Election the Liberals would win, or have the best chance of winning and returning to power. So long as Churchill kept his post, we were bound to believe that the present Government would bring in a good County Government Bill and other fair measures. His retirement gives us a cry of reform in county government—three acres and a cow, etc., etc. This would carry the counties if we could all unite earnestly in the work. Besides this there are other questions, English, Irish and Scotch, to be added to the platform, all making for success, and in the healthy struggle for which the unfriendly feeling which now exists among Liberals would disappear. The choice then seems to be Home Rule as the Liberal policy and certain defeat, or a Liberal platform (minus Home Rule for the present), and success with a restoration of the party to power. I want to see immediately a good County Government Bill, without which reform any great amelioration of the lot of the rural labourer is impossible. This reform is due to the English, Irish and Scotch people without further delay.—It would give me great pleasure to go through the counties as in 1885 for the old platform, the old Government and the old Leader, and so end this negation of political life. Liberals could at the same time hold their individual opinions about Home Rule, declaring it to be not on the platform for the time being, and hoping also that with time and discussion, an agreement on even this might be brought about.

“It seems to me that a great responsibility is thrown on yourself and one or two others, who in this struggle have preserved a moderate tone, and have refrained from dogmatic talk and personal bitterness.

“There is a great occasion for moving which I believe

will not occur again, but which can now be turned to good account.

"Excuse this long letter, but I felt bound to write you. At present Labouchere and Co. hold the field and encourage one another in making more marked a division which they do not seem to care about or regret. Peace cannot be made without peacemakers. If Chamberlain has held out the olive branch, it is necessary that some one should make a response or suggest a response with a view to further healing. •

"I have only now to wish you and yours all good wishes of the season and a happy and prosperous new year.

"Believe me,

"Very truly yours,

"JESSE COLLINGS."

And the following day Mr. Chamberlain wrote :

"Highbury,

"Moor Green,

"Birmingham,

"December 26th, 1886.

"DEAR FOWLER,

"Thanks. Through this bad business I have specially noted your fairness and consideration towards former associates and friends. Would that others had been like-minded !

"I have now done my part and can do no more. I fancy that if any advantage is to be taken of the situation it must be by the wise and temperate men of the party—those who have done nothing to embitter the controversy—using their influence with the leaders of both sections, and almost compelling an agreement.

"Yours sincerely,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

" 95, Elm Park Gardens,
" December 30th, '86.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" Of course in these difficult times men must take their own course. But Mr. G. will not, I think, follow the lead of your speech. A few words from him will appear on Jan. 3rd, but they will not carry things far. It seems to me as I said, unwise to rush into raptures at an 'olive branch' which did not make an iota of substantial advance—until we know what Chamberlain really means. •

" A happy new year to you all.
•

" Yours sincerely,
" JOHN MORLEY."

In public Henry Fowler had the same tunc to play as in these private letters. There is always a fascination in looking behind the scenes—in peering into a man's private opinions, to see how they tally with his public utterances. Some suspect a wide gulf between the two ; some suspect they can only be connected by a roundabout, wandering, winding way ; and some, who have no suspicions, and therefore are generally nearer the truth than their more knowing friends, see a simple straight road, and the wayfarers, though fools, do not err therein. My father never said in public what he did not believe in private, and he never confidentially advocated any cause which he was not prepared to follow out in the face of the world.

Conciliation was the object of his letters, and his speeches, at this storm-tossed period of political life, and all that he could he did, by written and by spoken word, to help it on. Posterity can form its own verdict as to the wisdom of his counsels, but of their sincerity there is no question.

At Leicester he said :

" Ireland wanted an Irish legislature for the management of what Parliament should decide to be exclusively Irish affairs. That was Mr. Gladstone's and the Liberal party's way of putting it. The Unionists' was—that the time has come to reform altogether the absurd anachronism known as Dublin Castle, to sweep

away altogether the alien boards and foreign officers, and to substitute for them a genuine Irish administration for purely Irish business. He would ask the cleverest man in the room to define the difference between the two. For his part he was ready to accept Mr. Chamberlain's solution of the problem—'a genuine Irish administration for purely Irish business.' And from the beginning to the end, the late Government never propounded, and never dreamt of, anything else but that. He did not see why the men on both sides, being practically agreed on the solution of the matter, could not apply that solution with safety. The party that followed Mr. Gladstone in his measure had been misunderstood, and had been defeated because they were misunderstood.

"The true aim of the Liberal party was not to be squabbling as to who should be in Office and who should be in Opposition. If their party was worth maintaining and uniting, and no one was more favourable to reunion than himself, it was in order that it might go on firmly and successfully to win still greater triumphs, and that they might produce the greatest happiness to the greatest number."

At Leeds he said: "He took a more hopeful view of the reunion of the Liberal party than did some of his friends. What was their position? Was there a sharp dividing line, clear and clean, running through the Liberal party, dividing it into two hostile and irreconcilable sections? The Tories said there was, and they were reaping the spoils of such a state of things, and wishing that the present conditions of affairs should become permanent. He did not want to minimize the difficulties of their position. He would take what was the very worst feature of it;—the Tory party had been placed in power, and was being kept in power, by the votes of a large number of Liberal electors, who had been led, and were being led, by some of the best and ablest statesmen of the Liberal party. They said that it was the only way by which they could defeat a policy which menaced the integrity of the Empire, and impaired the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. He repeated that the Liberal party were not advocates of such a policy. They did not want to repeal the Union, and they did not want to impair

the magnificent instrument of political freedom—the Great English Parliament.

“Liberal statesmanship was very much at fault if it could not develop a full, perfect system—complete in itself, complete in its operation—for the self-government of Ireland by Irishmen, without menacing, or even risking the unity of the Empire. It was unjust to attribute to people principles which they repudiated, and results which they did not contemplate—to which they were radically opposed. But, on the other hand, it was unjust to censure men who, before the public in stations of great dignity, and who, in private life within their own locality, had been working for years on behalf of the Liberal party—who had contributed no small amount of energy to her conflicts, and who had been responsible for a great deal of the success of Liberalism, when they did not see their way to agree with the remainder of the party on this question. He wanted the voice to go forward from that meeting that the time for this mutual recrimination had passed. The only permanent dividing line in politics, and certainly inside a party, was that of principle. Details could be discussed and settled by concession and common sense. The principle of the Liberal party—was Irish self-government. If there are any Liberals who are anxious to place the government of Ireland in the hands of the Irish people, who are willing to apply to Ireland those great principles of self-government which it has been the pride of the Liberal party to uphold in every part of the Empire; and in taking this new departure who are anxious that nothing should be done to weaken the union between the two countries or impair the authority of Parliament, to such Liberals he would say, ‘We share your anxieties, we appreciate your views, we are ready to safeguard the nation, we are ready to preserve the authority of the Imperial Parliament and to retain the integrity of the Empire. If our difference is one of detail let us as practical men test our respective plans, and see which are best to promote the result at which we are both aiming.’”

Again at Nottingham he showed that “Lord Hartington regarded Home Rule as involving an Irish legislative body and an Irish Executive. He approved of a local self-government in

Ireland on precisely similar lines to the local self-government already enjoyed by England and Scotland. The telegram of Mr. Chamberlain, the very able, eloquent, impressive and generous speech of Sir George Trevelyan, maintained a resistance to Home Rule—which they had hitherto urged—so far as they thought it endangered the unity of the Empire, impaired the authority of Parliament and weakened the protection to be given to the Irish minority. But neither Sir George Trevelyan nor Mr. Chamberlain rested from their previous declarations in favour of the wisest reforms in legislation and administration in Ireland, both of them intimated a willingness, at all events, to consider whether a united counsel might not be satisfactorily brought to the solution of the Irish question.

“ I can never speak of Lord Hartington except in terms of profound admiration and respect. Lord Hartington has been in the past a distinguished, loyal, Liberal leader. He has led the party at times of great difficulty, with unfailing judgment, wisdom and courage; who says exactly what he means, and means what he says, and when he has once put his foot down in advance he never retraces his steps. The fault I find with him is this—he is so slow in putting a step forward! Lord Hartington says that he will apply similar local institutions to those enjoyed, or to be enjoyed, in England and Scotland to Ireland. Is he prepared to give to the municipalities the same powers and similar authority as given in this country? Then I say, that though I understand refusing everything, I cannot understand so enormous a power of self-government which Lord Hartington proposes, and then to stop short of completing the system. It would be safer for all those interests which we are told would be imperilled, to pass the late Government's scheme.

“ If I take Mr. Chamberlain's own words—‘ We are agreed on Irish autonomy,’ there were two principles in the Bill which he regarded as vital. First the principle of autonomy, to which he said, ‘ I am able to give a hearty assent.’ In the House of Commons I heard him say, ‘ I accept the principle of an Irish legislative body for the Irish ’; at Hackney he said, ‘ What was

affairs.' As practical men I cannot see where the vital difference between us is. If we are agreed upon autonomy, if we are agreed that there should be an Irish legislative body, one difference may be as to the extent of the powers of that body, and as to the extent and manner in which it may possibly endanger the supremacy of Parliament; but we are as anxious to maintain the supremacy of Parliament as Mr. Chamberlain is. We may have expressed our opinions in this Bill with feebleness, but we mean this—the Irish people shall manage their own affairs. We mean that the united British Empire shall not be imperilled in the slightest possible degree. We mean that the Imperial Parliament shall remain without rival,—absolute, supreme and final; our authority in the British Empire we will never allow to be tampered with. I think if that telegram of Mr. Chamberlain and speech of Sir George Trevelyan are read in a true light, it comes to this—that those two statesmen see that the present state of things cannot continue. They think the solution is not an easy one, and it is not. They think that solution is to be worked out with caution—care and success demand combined action; I don't care for the words in which the proposal is framed, I care not what construction may be placed upon it, but I say, if there is one section of the Liberal party whose only difference from the other section is the mode by which a great reform can be carried out, there is nothing undignified, unwise or derogatory in either of these two parties offering to the other to talk the question over, and to see if they cannot agree unitedly on some mode or solution which, while securing the principle, and the resolute desire of both, will remove the objections and the opposition which have been urged against the minor details."

At Sheffield he alluded to Lord Hartington again as a man "of whom I shall never speak except in terms of profoundest respect. However much we may differ from him with reference to his present attitude, no true Liberal will ever forget the enormous services which Lord Hartington has rendered to the Liberal party. We can say of him, and I think you in Sheffield will understand the simile better than I do—that he has been true as steel. There has been no personal pique, no jealousy; everything is straightforward

and honourable. He has differed from us, he differed from the first. He has never flinched from the attitude he has taken up. We know we have a fair and honourable-minded opponent, we believe we shall convince him yet before the battle is over, and we believe the time will come when he will succeed with the universal applause of the whole party to that inheritance which we have so long predicted to be his, the leadership of the united Liberal party."

Lord Hartington was the future Prime Minister to whom Henry Fowler looked. A party such as he would have founded, and held, and led, would have been the kind of Liberal party which was my father's ideal. It would have been a statesman's party rather than a politician's, and it would have welded in one the interests of the masses with the claims of the classes. A great Imperial party dwelt in Henry Fowler's idealism; he saw the day go by when Lord Hartington might have formed it, and did not. He saw another later day go by when Lord Rosebery might have led it, and did not. The loss of that party was, my father believed, an incalculable and irrevocable loss to the nation, for which nothing could ever atone; and it was his conviction to the end, that such a party alone, marching with sure and measured tread along with the advance of events, could have saved England from the strife and unrest which to-day hinder all succeeding parties with a disorder and dissatisfaction which clog her constitution and confound her rights.

Speaking at Wolverhampton on this great, consuming question of the day Henry Fowler tried to take the sting out of some of the bitterness which was flying about and poisoning the blood of parties.

"He must say that he deplored and repudiated the criticism of Mr. Labouchere on Mr. Chamberlain. Perhaps that criticism was not intended to be taken seriously because the comparison of one of the foremost Liberal statesmen of the day to the Pope, to Marshal Bazaine, to the Devil, and finally, as an anti-climax to the ex-mayor of Hull, must excite their ridicule rather than their indignation. But to those who conscientiously believed in Liberal principles, and who regarded the unity of the Liberal party as the

only instrument by which these principles could effectively guide and control our legislation and administration, whether in Great Britain or Ireland, every honest attempt to terminate the unhappy discord must be welcome. He was not going to discuss Mr. Chamberlain's programme or proposals, all he would say there, was, that they demanded and deserved the most attentive and friendly consideration on the part of Mr. Gladstone and his late colleagues. He quite agreed with Mr. Labouchere that there were two policies—coercion or conciliation. He presumed that they were entitled to assume that the Liberal party as a whole was opposed to coercion; he assumed, and hoped they were entitled to assume,—that the Liberal party as a whole were in favour of conciliation. But they might differ—they did differ—as to the methods, the stages, the details, the machinery of conciliation. Those differences were worthy of united counsel, and of united consideration, in the hope that they might lead to united action. He read Mr. Chamberlain's speech as meaning that, and in that light regarded it, and welcomed it, as an honest and honourable attempt to reunite and strengthen the Liberal party. He thought that the time had arrived when they should endeavour, each one of them, to be moderate and just to those who differed from them, to regard the union of their party, the reunion of their party—as a thing worth making concessions for, worth making sacrifices for, and while they held firm to the great principle to which they had committed themselves, they ought to be ready, whenever simple detail was only at issue, to meet the views of those with whom it had been their pleasure to act in the past, and with whom they hoped to act in the future; to meet their views with respect to details, and endeavour to work out their principle upon lines which would command general confidence and support, although they might perhaps be longer in preparing the journey than they should like to be. Wolverhampton had not been backward hitherto in striking the keynote on many questions. Wolverhampton pronounced itself very early in favour of Home Rule, and it would be worthy of the best traditions of Wolverhampton to strike the keynote of Liberal reunion."

That others in the party followed my father in the *via media*

and were also anxious for reconciliation is shown by a letter from the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell written at the end of that fateful year :

“ 18, Wilton Street,

“ December 31st, 1886.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ All best wishes to you and Mrs. Fowler and your circle for 1887. Very many thanks for your kind note. Ever since I have had the advantage of your acquaintance it has been my happiness to find myself in close agreement with your views upon almost every political subject. In the article, I had written a paragraph (which the Editor had struck out for want of space), on the Leaders of the party, and I used these words: ‘ It cannot be doubted that in the next Liberal Cabinet Mr Henry Fowler will illustrate that religious side of Radicalism which is so potent in the country, and should never be unrepresented in high places.’ These words express a feeling which lies at the very root of my politics.

“ Meanwhile the line which you and I take is not a popular one with our party. Fire-eating is all the vogue, and men who try for union and peace are called Trimmers. I have never concealed my opinion that Mr. G.’s Bills were unworkable; nor will I ever be a consenting party to any scheme which should make life, property, and religious freedom in Ireland insecure. But, saving these points, I am ready to go any length towards satisfying the national sentiment. I am delighted that you have told the truth about —. His conduct is wantonly mischievous; and what his hearers do not perceive is, that he is trying to keep the Liberal party divided, in order to prevent Mr. G. from returning to power.

“ Ever sincerely yours,

“ G. W. E. RUSSELL.”

The article to which Mr. Russell refers was written by him for *Murray’s Magazine* and was called “ The Uses of Absurdity.” It dealt with the shattered fortunes of the Liberal party and

recommended moderate and healing counsel. Mr. Gladstone's Bills referred to, were, of course, the Home Rule Bill and the Irish Land Bill of 1886.

That similar feelings towards reconciliation were stirring in the Unionist camp is proved by such letters as the following :

“ Highbury,
“ Moor Green,
“ Birmingham,
“ January 4th, 1887.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Did you not sketch out some plan of Irish land purchase for the late Cabinet based on Irish security resources ?

“ If so, or if you have any ideas on this subject will you let me see them—in confidence, of course ? I remember talking to you on the matter in your room at the House of Commons.

“ You see we have made some progress. We must not be sanguine, but I am more hopeful than I was a week ago.

“ Yours very truly,
“ J. CHAMBERLAIN.”

And again in reply to the answer my father must have written :

“ Highbury,
“ Moor Green,
“ Birmingham,
“ January 6th, 1887.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Many thanks for your letter. I agree entirely with your principle and the arguments by which you support it. The objections are very weak.

“ I suppose that the real ‘ crux ’ consists in this—that Mr. G. hoped by a very liberal offer to Irish landlords to secure their assent to the Home Rule project.

“ But there is no reason that I can see in giving them the chance of exchanging an Irish Security for British Consols. We may perhaps impose the Irish Security in return for a

diminution in the interest but that is the utmost it will be prudent to do.

"Did you consider the subject of mortgages and charges? Is there not a strong equitable claim to reduce these when the income of the nominal productor is being so seriously curtailed?"

"Yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

And in the same correspondence a few days later:

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"Many thanks. I am afraid you are right about mortgages though it would not help my scheme if all creditors preferential as well as others submitted to a reduction of claim.

"I have always been in favour of the municipalization of the land, and my present plan provides for ultimate ownership by the Local Authority, the tenant paying a fixed and indirect Land Tax and being subject to conditions expressed by the Local Authority.

"Yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

But the fires the peacemakers hoped were quenched, were after all, only smouldering. The Round Table Conference came to nothing. No other efforts were made by the ex-Cabinet towards reconciliation. The Unionist party was formed, and Liberalism received, in my father's opinion, the worst blow which had ever befallen it.

It was with a real sense of personal trouble as well as political dismay that he spoke of "The unhappy schism in the Liberal party, which has split us into two opposing camps, which has separated old and well-tried comrades and friends, which has retarded—I might almost say destroyed—all the hopes of that Liberal legislation which roused our energies and kindled our hopes at the General Election of 1885."

CHAPTER XIV

1886—1892

IN OPPOSITION

" In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nation "

MILTON.

" The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."

COWPER.

THE next five years were darkly clouded in the political world in which my father lived. At first heavy clouds of smoke hung over the ashes of the great conflagration, tarnishing and begriming much that had been bright and fair in the Liberal outlook. And even after the smoke had cleared away, as mere smoke always will, the sky still hung dull and grey above the Liberal prospects.

In spite, however, of a certain political gloom, a radiant sun of thanksgiving rose in the year 1887 on the occasion of the Jubilee of our beloved Queen Victoria. That historic occasion created an atmosphere of loyalty and devotion which men of all sides and parties felt, and which they were all the better for feeling. It caused a lull in political partisanship, and hushed for a brief interval the clamour of contending sides. The great service in Westminster Abbey, at which my parents were present, was characterized by that reality of worship, which alone could be the fitting crown of so long and so prosperous a reign. My father often referred to his impressions of that great day of Jubilee—such impressions as must have been made on a devout and loyal

mind. The building of the Imperial Institute was decided upon as a memorial of the Jubilee, and my father was appointed one of the Committee—a representative committee of many branches of Art and learning.

“ Marlborough House,
“ 3rd November, 1886.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I am directed by the Prince of Wales to express an earnest hope that you will be so good as to afford him the benefit of your services by kindly consenting to serve as a member of a temporary committee which H. R. H. is forming for the purpose of conferring with the Representatives of the Colonies in regard to the Imperial Institute for the Colonies and India.

“ Believe me,
“ Yours truly,
“ FRANCIS KNOLLYS.”

My father always took a great interest in the Imperial Institute ; and in the year 1891 was appointed a Governor on the nomination of the Prince of Wales.

“ Marlborough House,
“ May 19th, 1891.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ The Prince of Wales desires me to write to you to express his hope that you may feel yourself at liberty to accept on his personal nomination the appointment of a Governor of the Imperial Institute. I may mention that the duties need be merely nominal. .

“ Believe me, yours very truly,
“ FRANCIS KNOLLYS.”

On the reception given to the Prince of Wales at the Imperial Institute in July, 1894, an interesting experiment in telegraphy was made. A telegram was sent off at 11 p.m. on the Friday night and was acknowledged from Simla in twenty minutes. The

object was to test the time of transmission before the line was cleared for the Prince's message, which took one minute and fifty seconds. A feat of telegraphing which has probably never been excelled.

Speaking on October 2nd, 1888, Henry Fowler said: "In his judgment the political situation and political outlook were disheartening and unsatisfactory. The past Session had been a hard one—the hardest of his Parliamentary life. Royal Commission work, Committee work, had added to the public and private business of the House, and burdened and taxed physical and mental endurance to the utmost." So work looks when the element of hope is eliminated. All the buoyancy seemed to have gone out of the Liberal party, and their aspirations were deadened and dulled. "They had had in the past Session Liberals denouncing the Liberal creed—they had had Liberals renouncing Liberal legislation, and they had had Liberals repudiating Liberal finance. On the other hand they had had Tories expressing and adopting Radical principles which they had hitherto detested and denounced. What did this political topsy-turvydom mean? It did not mean that all Liberals had become Tories—that all Tories had become Liberals; it did not mean that their party system of Government had collapsed, or that they were going to exchange the conflict of party hosts for the guerilla warfare of self-opinionated sections. It meant that there was one question which, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all the rest, one question that was of greater importance than even the foremost of our ordinary political conflicts, and that was the Government of Ireland, the peace of Ireland, the prosperity of Ireland, the relation of Ireland to the other parts of the Empire. And it was the greatest problem of this century."

The Coercion Act had been vigorously enforced to try to suppress the National League, and a thousand men had been put in prison. This policy was in direct antagonism to Henry Fowler's opinions. He said: "They could go on with coercion, they could persevere with it, and carry it to its bitterest end, they might try to stamp out the national sentiment of the people of Ireland. England was strong enough to make Ireland another

Poland, but that course would be impossible. England had something stronger than her arms and battalions, something more invincible than her ironclads, and that was the moral force of a great, free, religious people. The Radical-Union, as it called itself, had propounded a scheme for the local government of Ireland—a scheme which bore the imprimatur of Mr. Chamberlain—a scheme with respect to which Mr. Chamberlain said, ‘In this direction the ultimate solution of the Irish difficulty is to be found.’

“We may drag on this bitter controversy, we may delay the decision until we have deprived it of every semblance, not only of generosity, but of justice, but sooner or later the end is sure and certain. No man, either in our ranks or in the ranks of our opponents, doubts that in the end this great measure of Home Rule will succeed; our Empire will not be dismembered, our Parliament will not be dethroned from its constitutional supremacy; our peace and our property will not be engulfed in one common ruin; but the stupid folly of our misgovernment of Ireland will be swept away. Irishmen will have to grapple with their own difficulties, they will have to solve their own problems, they will have to care for their own interests, and thus, and thus only, will they grow into the perfect stature of a free, a prosperous, a self-governing people.”

It was difficult under the cloud of Ireland to look into all those other vast branches of legislation which ought to claim the attention of politicians. Everything outside the one great furnace of conflicting opinions, seemed cold and paralysed. But by and by time came in, as time always does, with a healing hand and an uplifting touch. Men stood up again amid the ashes, and they began to step out in other directions, and to lift up their heads again towards hope.

Henry Fowler was never one to be attacked with optimism, but even he at last abstracted his tired eyes from the spectacle of ruin, and began to see other questions and to think about other things. The question of finance always held a great attraction for him, and during his few months at the Treasury he had tasted blood. This interest ran—a golden strand—through all his

speeches and most of his Parliamentary life. No pattern of policy was complete in his rendering, and indeed no pattern is possible, without the well-considered question of finance. Had his years of office coincided in any adequate measure with his years of political life, then it might have been that his great and sound financial powers had found their true outlet in the great post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. In June he wrote from Woodthorne :

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ Many thanks for your note and its indications of a certain great authority's present leanings, but he distinctly pledged himself to the retention for all Imperial questions, and in his letter to Haslam, quoted in Dale's article, he committed himself to the full number. He cannot recede from that position. I am unable to discern the inconsistency of giving Ireland what you call a real measure of self-government, and the retention of the Irish M.P.'s, and therefore I will not put the two positions into antagonism. To say that he will not assent to it 'if it impairs real and effective autonomy' is importing a condition which has no application. Real and effective autonomy is the basis, the only basis, of any scheme, —without that the whole would be mockery, a delusion and a snare; but real and effective autonomy is consistent with, nay, in my opinion, is essential to, the real and effective union of Great Britain and Ireland, and if the two sections of the party are ready to negotiate on this basis for the settlement of the Irish difficulty, I am at a loss to discover the wisdom of the *non possumus*. The Irish Members will be divided on the English party lines—you must deduct the minority and its equivalent from the majority before you estimate the numerical value—e.g., 23 Irish Tories take 23 Irish Liberals and they are neutralised—and 57 is the disturbing figure. The crowning Imperial question is the retention in, or rejection from, Office of the Imperial Ministry—by that Ministry the veto will be exercised;—is Mr. G. prepared to give the Irish M.P.'s a vote in that? If he is, when and

where can he define the occasion when such a question will arise? if not then he may as well exclude them altogether. Depend upon it 'the line of least resistance' is as necessary a discovery in politics as in mechanics. I regard the recent letters of Mr. G. as indicating a quest in a contrary direction.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

In speaking on Naval Estimates in 1889 he said that "The House of Commons would be fully supported by the country in taking whatever steps would be necessary to secure that Naval supremacy which was essential to their national existence. It would be the duty of the House to see that whatever money was asked for was wisely spent, and that economy and efficiency were combined. The House would neglect its duty if, having regard to that enormous commerce of ours, which was to be found in every sea, and to the fact that so much of our raw material came from abroad, it did not see that that commerce was protected whatever might happen in the hurly-burly of foreign politics, or in the event of any attack which might be made upon our nation. With reference to the Army he would say, and perhaps it was rather a paradoxical remark to make, that we had also a line of defence, and our line of defence was our small army. They might ask what he meant by that? He meant this—while on the one hand it was our duty to see that we received—and we did not receive it at present—a full equivalent of the enormous sum which we expended on that yearly; on the other hand, it was our duty in the interests of ourselves, in the interests of peace, in the interests of prosperity, to resist any and every attempt, to convert this country into a great military power. We did not want to copy the great territorial nations of the Continent, so far as military matters were concerned. He trusted that the attention of Parliament would be called to the extraordinary speech that was recently made at Birmingham, when one of the principal military advisers to the Secretary of State for War made the astonishing proposition that a system of universal conscription should be introduced into this country. They knew what that meant—

the abstracting of every man at perhaps the most critical period of his manhood from trade, from commerce, from industry, from contributing to the wealth and prosperity of the country and to his own prosperity, and to reducing him to barrack life, to train him up at his country's cost as a soldier. They might have, and no doubt had, strong differences of opinion on a variety of questions, but he was assured that Englishmen of every shade of opinion, of every class and condition, would unite in overwhelming numbers in resisting to the uttermost every attempt to levy that blood tax which was the curse and crime of modern Europe."

He also at this time was considering universal suffrage and free education. With regard to the former his opinion was "that no man ought to have more than one vote. There ought to be one register of voters, on which a man should be, for the Town Council, School Board, Board of Guardians, and the County Council. He would have no modification, no qualification, no plural vote; he would have one register, and whoever was on that register should be one of the electors entitled to exercise his electoral rights whatever the election might be."

With regard to free education he said: "He was as strong an advocate for it as ever. One of the first duties of the nation was to educate its children. The payment of fees was an intolerable burden upon a very large mass of the population. He thought when Parliament was free, and it was not free, to attend to the affairs of Great Britain, the question of free education would be one of the first to come to the front."

On his annual review of Parliamentary work which he gave to his constituents on October 19th, 1889, he thus alluded to the death of John Bright. He said: "He must refer to the great loss which the House of Commons and the country had sustained in the death of that great statesman, who combined the keenest political sagacity and the strongest sense with the most unwavering attachment to the moral and physical progress of the masses of his countrymen, and who maintained and who defended his political opinions with an eloquence unequalled alike for its brilliant rhetoric, and its close and resistless force. Two or three nights before Mr. Bright left London for the last time, he had a

very long conversation with him, embracing the whole range of practical politics. There was one subject on which they agreed to differ; one subject, and he thought he might say one subject alone, on which he was not prepared to follow John Bright's opinion, and to adopt his policy. But he was very much impressed with the strength, with the wisdom, with the progressive Liberalism of that great Tribune of the people. And he thought he might say without vanity to his constituents, that he would ever cherish amongst his most valued memories the kind words in which Mr. Bright was pleased to express his approval of his Parliamentary conduct, and his Parliamentary career."

He went on to say that though the Opposition had been labelled "not only undisciplined but impotent," it had won two of the greatest victories of the Session. It had resisted and defeated the attempt—the first attempt made by any responsible Government since the Repeal of the Corn Laws—to re-introduce the principle and doctrines of Protection into the fiscal system of this country, and to limit the quantity and raise the price of a prime article of the food of the people." (The defeat of the Sugar Convention.) "The other victory was on the tithe question. The Government proposed to make the tenant farmers personally liable in the County Court for the tithes, but was compelled by the Opposition to withdraw that Bill. Four principles for which the Liberals had contended for years, had been submitted to Parliament and three of them had been accepted. The fourth was accepted by the Government but defeated in the House of Lords. The first was free education, the next was graduated taxation—the Liberals asked for equality of burdens and the Government gave it to them. The Government had also admitted the principle of the abolition of primogeniture—the Liberal party would hold them to that admission."

One of the main causes of the Liberal defeat had, of course, been the number of abstentions in the last election, and to this Henry Fowler very characteristically alluded. He hated the principle of haste almost as much as that of harm. He blamed in his heart the rush of the Home Rule Bill, though he understood the motive that at seventy-seven years of age urged Mr. Gladstone to action

lest it should be too late. But he had no sympathy whatever with a rushed policy when leaders, who had not by any means reached threescore years and ten, still tried to press and push the people. He believed in educating public opinion rather than storming it, and all this was a work of time, and a work worthy of time. "He found no fault with men who abstained from voting at the last election. He thought a man whose mind was not made up clearly did right to abstain. He was not surprised that men hesitated in adopting what appeared to be a new policy, and a policy which was at variance, in some respects, with what the party had previously professed. That was the strength of all our political action in this country hitherto, and he hoped it would be so in the future. They had never made a great change without the bulk of the people's being convinced, and he would rather not carry Home Rule for a time, unless they carried it with the clear conviction and approval of a distinct majority of the people. Therefore he did not complain that men should have paused for consideration before deciding on the question."

He advocated time and deliberation to the fullest extent, but he also laid down the axiom that a decision made after a due consideration by the people, was irrevocable and final. And in later years when the question of Tariff Reform broke out again into life, quite apart from his own convictions on the matter, he would shake his head over what he considered to be an utterly unconstitutional act in trying to go back upon the accomplished fact of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the country's decision then against Protection. "Our political reforms differ from the political reforms on the Continent and elsewhere, because hitherto they have never been attempted to be reversed. Take the policy of Free Trade and a variety of other things. However strongly the men who subsequently came into Office might have opposed the measures of reform, they have accepted them as the judgment of the nation, and have not attempted to reverse them, and so the country's political progress, if not so very fast, has been sure."

Another of his political as well as personal axioms was—"Do one thing at a time." He was a great believer in that principle, and the power of concentrated force. This also made against the

crowding of haste. "There is a characteristic of British thought, of British political action—aye, and I might say, of British common sense, that is to do one thing at a time and to do it well. We find generally that if a man has too many irons in the fire a good many of them grow cold. The men who succeed are the men who put all their force and energy and power into one thing and do it; the parties that succeed, and the policies that succeed, and the Governments that succeed, are the parties, the policies, and the Governments that are from time to time concentrated on one thing, which grapple with one thing, and do it. That has been the history of every great movement in this country. Every one of our great political achievements, every one of our great Liberal achievements, has been dealt with at the time by itself. The whole political force of the time has been concentrated upon it, the party has put its shoulder to the wheel in carrying it out."

This verily was an autumn time for the Liberal party. A sad sense of decaying hopes and dying possibilities chilled the ardour which even the heat of conflict fires. From time to time letters from one statesman to another fluttered down, but like autumn leaves they lay where they fell and no new life sprang up. Some such letters my father wrote to Mr. Morley. On the 18th April he wrote from Woodthorne :

"MY DEAR MORLEY,

"As I did not see you in town I hope you will let me gossip on one or two points and you need not trouble to bother about a reply. The Eighty Club behaved very kindly—although they had lost a sovereign and found a farthing, they concealed their annoyance, received me very cordially—listened to me most attentively for upwards of half an hour (during which I expounded the thoughts you had suggested), and passed a unanimous vote of thanks. I have written a reply to Balfour's letter on my speech and I hope it will appear to-morrow.

"Birmingham! Ought we to have fought?—if we had not interfered, the Dissentients and Tories would have openly quarrelled, and a cynical neutrality on our side would have

avoided the blow (and it is a blow) of the 3,000 majority after the visit of Mr. G. Are our Birmingham experts, past and present, infallible? Our second in command (though an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer) was not in the House on the Budget night, although he was in London! This has been noticed, not unnaturally. Was it tactically wise? The 60 constituencies referred to in Mr. G.'s speech as having turned a majority of 14 into a tie are now 66. In 1886 they were 41 Tories, 25 Liberals. Tory majority 16. To-day they are 32 Tories, 34 Liberals, or a Liberal majority of 2. Donegal should be discussed on the re-assembly. The Irish will have to make themselves disagreeable in Parliament if the Tory politicians are to be moved. Reason is not their friend or their foe.

"I am getting up a speech on the Sugar Bounties, which ought to be fought bitterly, obstructionally, and to the end. I am very busy down here, but I had some steam to blow off. I have given you an idea of my grumblings. What say you of Rosebery's idea of a Commission on Home Rule? When will Herschell break his silence? Don't answer my queries until I see you and

" Believe me,

" Yours faithfully,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

Two days later :

" Woodthorne,

" 20th April, 1889.

" MY DEAR MORLEY,

" The answer to the enclosed is—that the case of our producers and refiners is that bounty-fed sugar increases the supply and reduces the price, and the prohibition of bounty-fed sugar can only, and will only, benefit, and is intended to benefit, the West Indies, therefore Greenock and Liverpool, by reducing the supply of sugar and increasing the price. The three last sentences are delicious—'Monopoly is the source of dearness'—*ergo*, give Germany and the West

Indies the monopoly of our markets, shut out America, France, Denmark, Brazil, etc., etc. you break down the monopoly!

"I agree as to Rosebery's scheme. I mean to your opinion. You misunderstand me as to Herschell—all I meant was that he had not spoken in public since his return. But I still think (though I don't say), that it is not only desirable but essential that Mr. G. and his colleagues should agree as to what they mean to submit to the electorate before the election comes. The constituencies will not (at least I confidently think so), give any man, or any set of men, a *carte-blanche* on Irish questions.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

The first Sunday in 1890 my father spent at Sandringham, a visit which to him was of the greatest interest as showing his royal Host and Hostess in the simple setting of an English country home.

His impressions of, and admiration for, the then Prince of Wales' diplomatic judgment and practical common-sense were strengthened by the more intimate talk which he had with H.R.H. there. And he was always enthusiastic in praise of these sound qualities which characterized King Edward VII's kingship.

"Sandringham,

"Norfolk.

"General Sir Dighton Probyn presents his compliments to Mr. Fowler and writes by direction of the Prince and Princess of Wales to invite him to pay their Royal Highnesses a visit at Sandringham from the 4th January to remain till Monday, 6th. If not inconvenient to Mr. Fowler, Sir Dighton Probyn would advise him to travel down to Sandringham by the 3.55 p.m. 'Saturday's Special' from St. Pancras, which is due at Wolferton, the station for Sandringham, at 6.30 p.m.

"Carriages will be sent to Wolferton, to meet all guests travelling by that train.

"December 25th, 1889."

During the Session of 1890 Henry Fowler introduced a private Member's Bill for extending the powers of local authorities, which the Government supported, and which became law. In referring to that Bill in Wolverhampton he said that "he was not entitled to any credit for the Bill for which he was nominally responsible; it had been prepared by the able Town Clerk of Wolverhampton (Mr. Horatio Brevitt), whose experience and knowledge gave his suggestions great weight. He was but Mr. Brevitt's mouthpiece; and he had to thank him, as the town had to thank him, for a useful enlargement of the powers which local authorities possessed for procuring the public health and promoting the public safety and convenience"

At this time a Bill had been passed for the granting of self-government to the Colony of Western Australia—the creation of another Parliament with an executive Government responsible to that Parliament, which was a recognition of the fact that the inhabitants of Western Australia could govern themselves a great deal better than they could be governed from Downing Street. Henry Fowler was quick to lay his finger on this fact, and to point out that "the adoption of Home Rule in another part of the Queen's dominions had been discussed and sanctioned without a word's being said about the disintegration of the Empire. Not one of the bogies was trotted out. No menaces were flaunted in their faces. The House of Commons and its leaders discussed that measure upon its merits, and upon what was best for the people in Western Australia. He left it to them to apply the lesson!

In 1891 the thin line of light along the horizon, which the most hopeful of the Liberal party had been looking to, suddenly seemed to broaden, as on many a clouded day, and a fuller light spread up the sky. There was a fresher sound even in Henry Fowler's speeches, though he was ever the pessimist in political concerns; and he rejoiced in the adoption of the Liberal measure of Free Education, even though it was brought forward by a Tory Government. It was not the credit of such measures that my father wanted for his party, it was the benefit of them he craved for the country at large, and he could disinterestedly rejoice later when free education was

conferred upon the people. "He had fought against what he called the odious and abominable tax of the school pence. He had fought for free education when the Tories maintained that free education was economically unsound, politically unjust and financially dangerous, and should be resisted to the bitter end. He did not believe there was a Tory Member in the House of Commons, and there certainly was no one on the Government Bench, who did not win his seat in 1885 upon a distinct, repeated, solemn pledge that he was opposed to free education. But never mind what the Tory motive and policy were, Liberals were going to have free education. They might try to accompany it with conditions; they might try to inscribe on the statute book for the first time that public money should be spent without popular control—they might as well try to keep back the rising tide by bulwarks of sand; nine-tenths of the seven and a half millions cost of elementary education would come out of the public purse—very little more than one-tenth was received from voluntary contributors—and would the British people entrust the expenditure of that enormous sum of money to totally irresponsible private organizations? This difficulty would not arise in the large towns, but in thousands of country parishes there was but one school, and parents were compelled to send their children to that one school. He said that if that one school was kept up out of public funds the public had the right of seeing that that expenditure was devoted, first to secure the best education that that money would provide, and secondly that the conscientious convictions of no class should be outraged in the teaching compulsorily enforced upon their children. They would put the Free Education Measure on the statute book—and, as in the case of Roman Catholic Emancipation, Repeal of the Corn Laws, Extension of the Franchise, they would make the Tory party the hewers of their wood and the drawers of their water."

During this Session Henry Fowler was instrumental in proposing and passing the Wolverhampton Corporation Act of 1891. Amongst other privileges a special clause in this Act allowed the Corporation to present the Freedom of the Borough to men who had done well for their town, and the first advantage which the

Corporation took of that power was to confer the Freedom of the Borough upon Henry Fowler.

At a meeting of the Town Council of Wolverhampton held on the 12th October, 1891, it was moved and carried unanimously: "That the best thanks of this Council be, and they are hereby, accorded to the Right Hon. H. H. Fowler, M.P. for the Eastern Division of the Parliamentary Borough of Wolverhampton, for the signal service which he has rendered to the Corporation in relation to the promotion and passing of the Wolverhampton Corporation Act, 1891. The powerful and masterly speech of Mr. Fowler upon the second reading of this measure, supplemented by his untiring energy and efforts, have been principally the means of securing to this town special statutory powers in relation to its sewage disposal. The Council therefore desire to publicly acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. Fowler for his valuable aid and assistance in this and other important matters affecting the welfare of this Municipality."

It was further moved and carried at that meeting:

"That in recognition of his distinguished Parliamentary career, and in order to commemorate in a suitable manner the eminent services rendered by the Right Hon. H. H. Fowler, M.P., to this Municipality, the Council are of opinion that his portrait should be painted in oils, and hung in the Council Chamber, and that the Honorary Freedom of the Borough should also, at an early date, be conferred upon Mr. Fowler."

And on the 15th February, 1892, the Freedom of the Borough of Wolverhampton was conferred upon my father.

In addressing the Council on that occasion he made one of his most characteristic speeches. In thanking them for thus perpetuating his membership of the Council he spoke of it as—"a membership which I value as extending over a long period of my life, as one of my greatest honours and as one of my most agreeable occupations." He pointed out that "in the service of this Corporation I learnt lessons of the administration of public affairs, the transaction of public business, and of the management of public finance, which have been of inestimable value to me in various positions which I have been called upon to hold." In thanking

the Council also for the graceful manner in which they had passed the resolution, he thus alluded to his political opponents :

“ We live in a time in which differences of opinion on Imperial affairs have been accentuated perhaps to their utmost acerbity. I have always tried to do justice to my political opponents. I have always tried, perhaps imperfectly tried, but I have tried, to recognize the purity, and the patriotism of their aims, and I have always been ready to concede to them what I have claimed for myself. But it is not the less gratifying on an occasion like this, and in the history of a town like this, to find that party politics are not the only object and aim of our public life. There is a many-sidedness in English citizenship, of which the proceedings which have culminated to-day are by no means a trifling illustration. We are able to recognize, and I trust we ever shall recognize, public service, honestly, honourably rendered in any and in every sphere, and not be perpetually putting on spectacles which not only cloud our own vision, but distort the appearance of our opponents. We associate the Freedom of Boroughs with old Corporations. It is only by recent legislation that that privilege has been passed on to the more modern institutions. But I am not sure that the oldest Corporations have always been the best. I am not sure that some of the good wine has not been kept until now ; and although ours is not an old Corporation, I venture to say that its history justified its creation, and that those who have been associated with it up to the present moment, and those who will be associated with it from generation to generation, will always look back upon the first fifty years of its history with pride and satisfaction.”

He went on to enumerate the many achievements of the Corporation. The state of the streets, the abolition of the rookeries of the town, the sanitary improvements, the supply of good water—“ a better supply of water than any town in this kingdom, except Glasgow,” the establishment of a Free Library (before the days of Mr. Carnegie), the public park, and, thanks to the generosity of a private citizen, a beautiful Art Gallery.

“ When I look back at all these things, and I see a reduction in our death rate, I see our education increased, I see the means of the recreation and the enjoyment of the people extended and

elevated, I say that this Council has a very bright record to look back upon. I don't mean to say it has had no imperfections. It has the essential elements of all human institutions. It has made its mistakes; but you remember what a distinguished American diplomat said, 'that a man who never made a mistake never made anything.' We have made our mistakes, we are but human, but I can say this of the Corporation of Wolverhampton, you cannot find from the first chapters of its history until to-day, a trace of jobbery or a whisper of scandal."

He referred to the value of municipal institutions as the germ of a great deal that is valuable in national institutions, but he did not ignore the fact that there had been corruption and decay, and that fifty-five years ago the Royal Commission had reported that there existed a well-founded distrust of the management of municipal corporations. This he said ought to teach the lesson that even the best of institutions depend upon the mode in which they are administered, and the character of the men to whom they are entrusted, and then he launched forth into one of his favourite themes, "I would trust no body of men, however high their motives, however lofty their character—I would entrust no body of men with power who were not responsible, directly responsible, to public opinion. Responsibility to public opinion is the secret of their present purity and efficiency and success. Some people say that Town Councils do nothing but raise the rates. It is their duty to raise the rates if they are honest. They are here for that purpose. They must guarantee an expenditure for the benefit of all, and all must share the burden of that expenditure. A common benefit involves a common burden; and although I have the opinion that the incidence of taxation, by which our local revenue is to be raised, is capable of very vast improvement, yet the principle remains the same, that out of the common purse of a locality, bound together by those ties, knitted together by those interests, which form what, from time immemorial, men of different languages and different races have called the city, the municipality, the State—out of that common fund there should be defrayed a public expenditure for the benefit of all, and for the protection of all. And it is right that those who are strong should bear the

infirmities of the weak. It is right that those who have realized, either by their own labour, or by the labour of those who have gone before them, an immunity from the burden of hard daily toil—it is reasonable that they should contribute out of their abundance for the benefit of those—and they are the majority—whose hard lot it is to toil for their daily bread. It is the duty of a community to protect the interests of its humblest members; to protect them against their friends, against their own folly, against their own vice, against their own temptations. It is our duty to provide for them means of education, means of instruction, and means of enjoyment, too.” He showed further how contagious are municipal institutions and how at that time the counties of England were copying them. “It may be in the future that Parliament will devolve upon and delegate to local authorities in the county and in the borough, larger powers of administration, and enable us to carry out in our own way, and at our own doors, those improvements which we think desirable in our local and in our municipal life.” And finally he thanked them again for the high honour which they had conferred upon him, as well as for the proposed portrait to be hung in the Town Hall. “You have to-day conferred upon me a high honour. I value it for its own sake. I value it still more for the spirit, the manner, the circumstances of its bestowal. You have to-day imposed upon me a duty and a responsibility. I accept them both, and I will, to the utmost of my ability, here and elsewhere, endeavour to promote your interests, to uphold your dignity, and to discharge all the obligations which belong to the citizenship of what I am proud to say is no mean city.”

My father's portrait was painted by Mr. Arthur Cope, R.A., and was exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1893. This wonderful likeness was the result not only of many sittings in the artist's studio, but Mr. Cope also attended several debates in the House of Commons, where he caught tricks and expressions which could not have been called up at will by any sitter, but were the unconscious personal touches which were only to be found during the very act of debate. On presenting the picture back to the town, after receiving it as the gift of the town, my father said, “Might



From the Painting by Arthur Cope 1914

Henry H. Fowler

he be allowed to say in no spirit of exultation or boast, but as a matter of straightforward truth, that he should be glad if the picture, of which he had been the recipient, and which he asked the Corporation to accept to be hung in the Council Chamber, should indicate or rather testify hereafter in a public manner to the fact of the freedom of access to the service of the Crown, and tell the story that those who had served their own town to the satisfaction and approval of their fellow citizens, were not thereby precluded from seeking to serve their country in another sphere and under other conditions.*

Mr. Arthur Cope sends the following recollections of my father, and of the time when he was painting three portraits of him:—the first hangs in the Wolverhampton Town Hall, the second belongs to his own family, and the third was painted for the Incorporated Law Society. "My recollections of the late Viscount Wolverhampton," writes Mr. Cope, "are all pleasant ones. I remember his first visit to my studio very well—and when next I saw him it was in the House of Commons. It happened that I was painting several M.P.'s at that time and found it very useful to go and listen to the debates, and study my victims as speakers or listeners unknown to them. On the occasion in question, some measure came up having reference to legislation to do with Friendly Societies. The mover had apparently annoyed a Member of the opposite side, who immediately blocked the motion. In a moment party feeling was roused, and the obviously beneficial measure would have been lost. Sir Henry Fowler got up, and, in a quiet and most pleasant voice, calmed the storm, and appealed to the good sense and feeling of both sides. It was done not only just at the crucial moment, but done so well that he carried the matter through at once, obviously to the satisfaction of the whole House. This small incident to me is very typical of his broad-mindedness and strong common sense—qualities only too rare—and another instance at his own dinner-table, was, I think, very characteristic. It was in the middle of the Boer War. A Radical M.P. was somewhat vindictive about everything, and fell foul of Lord Kitchener, saying he was 'The best hated man in the British army.' Sir Henry at once said: 'Yes! the best hated man in

the army—since the Duke of Wellington.’ Lord Wolverhampton could always see the other side of the hedge, though he was never on it. He kept to his own party when the Unionist split came. Looking at a portrait of the then Lord Hartington in my studio, he said : ‘ Well ! there’s a sound Englishman, who never stooped to a single party dodge, and who never makes a statement which he cannot back up with good solid argument.’

“ I got to know Sir Henry intimately during the time he was sitting to me for the three portraits I painted of him ; and that intimacy left behind a very deep and warm regard for his memory, which I still cherish.”

The Conservative Government had in 1892 run out its appointed span of years ; a dissolution was necessary, and, with hope revived, the Liberals rallied to the fight. Henry Fowler’s last words before the election were . “ Unbroken precedent had settled the question that Parliament expires by the effluxion of time at the end of its sixth year. Whatever might be the date of the election the time was rapidly approaching for the constituencies to decide many questions of supreme importance. The Liberal party had a policy for Ireland, and it had a policy for Great Britain, and they were constantly told that both these policies were impossible. An attempt to give good government to Ireland would, according to their opponents, inevitably destroy every prospect of carrying out the reforms which the people of England and Scotland desired. Personally, he thought it might be more accurately said that the determination to inflict bad government on Ireland, involving, as it had done and would do, the devotion of the greater part of Parliamentary time and energy to Irish affairs, would assuredly prevent the consideration by Parliament of those reforms to which the enemies of Home Rule were bitterly opposed. He believed that he was within the mark when he said that more than one-half of the time of the present Parliament had been devoted to questions of administration and legislation for Ireland, and year by year that state of things got worse. If the constituencies decided that the affairs of Ireland, great or small, were to be transacted on the floor of the Imperial Parliament, or, in other words, that the work which could be well done by Irishmen in

Dublin, was to be badly done by Englishmen and Scotchmen in Westminster, then the certain result would be that Ireland would devour more and more of that time which Great Britain must have, if her rights and interests were to be adequately considered.

"Six years ago the Liberal party maintained that it was in the interests of Ireland and Great Britain, that Parliament should delegate to an Irish Legislature and Executive the control of Irish affairs. The experience and the history of the last six years, with all its changes and startling incidents, with all its difficulties and perplexities—had only repeated and accentuated the lesson of the century that the English government of Ireland was a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. The same issue would be submitted to the people of the United Kingdom. He did not pretend to say that the solution of that problem was simple or easy. He did not shut his eyes to the difficulties with which it was surrounded, nor to the fact that these difficulties might be enormously aggravated by party quarrels, by personal jealousies, by sectarian bigotry; but he declined to admit that the wisdom, or the courage, or the patriotism of Parliament were unable to combine to strengthen our supreme Imperial rule, or that a scheme for the government of Ireland could not be devised by the elected representatives of the Irish people. The Liberal party had a policy for Great Britain as well as for Ireland. The time had not come when anyone could say, 'Rest and be thankful—there is no need for reform.' The need for reform was as great to-day as it ever was, and every day developed new schemes. They wanted legislation with reference to the condition of the labouring classes, and the regulation of the sale of intoxicating liquors, and for the adjustment of taxation. Politics, the science of human happiness, was opening up a new chapter of its history. Old things were passing away. About fifty years ago Lord Beaconsfield wrote his most brilliant novel, in which he dealt with the conflict between capital and labour. He styled that novel *Sybil, or the New Generation*. That new generation had come; that new generation was formulating its own watchword, and was defining its own policy. It might be mistaken, it might be precipitate, it might be unwise, but it was in earnest, and the shibboleth of

parties and the cant of persons could not stay its hand. If wrong it would have to be proved to be wrong. Denunciation, declaration, vague wild prophecy would be of no use. Men were now grappling with the facts of life as they saw them before them; and perhaps with regard to politics it might be said what was once said of a great divine of the English Church that he would rather have one great man's doubt than many men's beliefs. In politics there were many questions on which they would rather have the doubts of earnest and inquiring and devoted men, than they would have the stereotyped, mechanical, obsolete beliefs of the arm-chair politicians who were satisfied with things as they were; who found the world, perhaps, the best of all possible worlds; who desired no change which might either disturb their repose or to some extent impair their enjoyment. The advanced Radicals—if they were right—and in some things he knew they were right—deserved the support of all who were waging war with ignorance, with intemperance, with cruelty, with vice; of all who believed the prosperity and the happiness of the masses of the people to be the strength and the glory of the nation."

CHAPTER XV

1893—1894

PARISH COUNCILS BILL

"So find we profit
By losing of our prayers."

SHAKESPEARE.

"How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings of the poor,
How gain in life, as life advances.
Valour and charity more and more."

TENNYSON.

IN the General Election of 1892 Henry Fowler faced his constituents for the fourth time, and was returned unopposed. His election address was the shortest he ever issued. It simply contained a repetition of his adherence to Home Rule, and his acceptance of what was known as the Newcastle programme; and he only spoke twice in Wolverhampton. But up and down the country as well as in the immediate neighbourhood, he spoke untiringly, and as forcefully as ever, fulfilling endless engagements and throwing himself heart and soul into the ardour of the fight. It is worthy of note in spite of the slow flow of the Liberal tide, that in five places where he spoke, a Liberal candidate was returned. Much was hoped for in the appeal to the country towards rebuilding the Liberal party, but it was building upon ruins, and disappointment darkened the return of the Liberal Government. The atmosphere was heavy with disappointment, and it concentrated itself into a special discharge on my father's head in the formation of the Government.

When Mr. John Morley spoke to him before his interview with

Mr. Gladstone, who then at the age of eighty-three came back as Prime Minister, his words were: "You will be disappointed—but I have done all I could." My father asked but one question: "Is it the Cabinet?" "Of course, but——!" He had fairly expected a post in the first rank, and the Presidency of the Local Government Board was offered him. This was one of the hardest blows he ever received, and it was one that he stood up to the best. He never talked of unpleasant things, and he made no allusion to his feeling in this matter, nor showed any personal chagrin. Many a man would have turned bitter, and filled his pockets with stones which would have been useful by and by for hurling at his party. Many a man would have turned a critical eye and a caustic tongue on a leadership which had led him along a lower road than that of his expectations and his hopes. Many a man would have folded up the energies which it seemed were not adequately appreciated, and taken the work lightly which was so far from his desires. But not so Henry Fowler. He rose to a higher position in public service than that of any Secretary of State, in giving of his best to an ungracious Government, and in working to the furthest limit of his strength in the lowest room. And in his eighteen months at the Local Government Board he stamped his name upon the Statue Book as the author of a Measure, which, in the record of history, stands out as the greatest practical achievement of Mr. Gladstone's last Government. He kissed hands on being admitted to his Office by the Queen at Osborne on August 18th, 1892, and he attended his first Cabinet Council two days later at 1, Carlton Gardens.

He had, previous to the last General Election, served on a Labour Commission at the suggestion of Mr. Gladstone.

" 18, Park Lane,

" March 21st, 1891.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I have undertaken at Smith's request to ascertain whether we can supply him from our bench with two Members for the Labour Commission.

" Mundella would be one, and, if it is agreeable to you to

serve, I shall be most ready to propose you as the other. I mean to reserve my own personal opinion as to the wisdom of appointing such a Committee, but it has on the whole appeared to be thought among us that we ought not to refuse a share in its composition. I would also say that the acceptance would be on the understanding that our men are not dissatisfied with the choice which may be made of leading men. I enclose the rough draft of the motion to be made.

“Sincerely yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

And it was in connection with this Commission that my father expressed his opinions on the Eight Hours question :

“The point at issue is not the desirability nor the advantage of limiting the hours of labour, but the difficult question is whether the legislature should interfere compulsorily. When the majority of the working classes of the country, who are most interested in the prosperity of the country, have arrived at the conclusion that it is wise and safe and practicable by legislation to limit to some extent the hours of labour, you may depend upon it that the combination will be resistless. But it has not arrived—the question is not ripe.” He never plucked a question that was not ripe. His plan, old-fashioned though it may seem in these present days of forcing everything long before it has had a chance to ripen of itself, was to wait until the fruit was ready to drop, and then, and not till then, to gather it.

The new Parliament and the new Government opened their operations with a renewal of Irish policy. There was a fresh Home Rule Bill, eventually passed by the House of Commons, but rejected by the House of Lords—which swallowed up eighty-two days of legislative work in the former, consumed all the resources of the three Members of the administration who were principally concerned in it, and finally brought the great Liberal Leader of the nineteenth century to the end of his political tether. In May, 1893, Henry Fowler wrote the following letter which clearly defines his views about the exclusion of the Irish Members, this being the crucial difficulty of the Home Rule Scheme.

" Local Government Board,

" May 13th, 1893.

" DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

" I mentioned to you on Thursday evening that I entertained a strong opinion with reference to the amendment to clause 2 of the Irish Bill which had been put down by Sir Henry James." (The supreme power of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things within the Queen's dominions). " I am aware that the omission of the proviso, which that amendment proposes, would not in a legal sense detract from the inherent inalienable supremacy of the Imperial Parliament; but the question has reached a stage when public opinion in this country will not be satisfied with a technical contention, however clear and conclusive that may be to a legal mind. If Parliament is asked formally to declare what the Government have, in 'the most unequivocal language, asserted to be 'unquestioned and unquestionable,' a refusal to make that declaration would be regarded in a most unfavourable light. Tactically I think that such a refusal would be a grave mistake. Personally I have so repeatedly pledged myself to the maintenance of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, that I should be placed in a very difficult position if asked to vote against the distinct assertion of that supremacy. My own electoral experiences (and I took part in 16 or 17 of the recent contests) are that the strongest feeling exists in the constituencies with regard to the supremacy, and I am clear that any appearance of hesitation or reluctance on this point would be attended with the most disastrous results. Under these circumstances I am sure that you will not be surprised that I venture to urge upon you that the amendment either in its present shape, or as forming a separate clause, should be accepted.

" Yours faithfully,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

And with that letter is the following one, though which was written first it is impossible to know, this being undated.

“ Minley Manor,

“ Farnborough, Hants.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I am writing about the James Proviso. I think our ‘ treaty,’ if there be one, has two articles, effective maintenance of the Supremacy being one, and effective autonomy for Ireland in Irish matters being the other ; and I am not disposed to be squeamish in construing them, although neither should be unnecessarily large.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

It was in Henry Fowler’s opinion essential to any successful Irish Bill to retain the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament, though this was not included in the Bill of 1886. It was one of those main points on which my father differed from Mr. Gladstone, but which he nevertheless delegated to classification of details. And very shortly afterwards it was proved so to be ; for as early as 1887, the exclusion of the Irish Members was abandoned by the leaders. In the autumn of 1893 my father spoke his last words on the Irish question in connection with the second Home Rule Bill. He said that he remained in exactly the same position with regard to Home Rule as he had occupied before. He showed that the obstacle of the exclusion of the Irish Members had been done away with and that their retention now was inevitable :—it was in his opinion “ a question of the constitutional right of Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom, and I contend that under the scheme of Home Rule approved by the House of Commons it would be the grossest injustice to interfere with that right. The Bill reserved to the sole authority of Parliament a large number of questions in which Ireland is, and will be, vitally interested. With that Parliament remained the power of fixing the taxation which Ireland will have to pay, and the control of the expenditure to which Irish taxpayers must contribute. The veto which would

control the legislature of Ireland was placed in the hands of the Ministry, whose existence depended upon the confidence of the House of Commons. On these grounds the right of Ireland to be represented cannot be questioned, and above and beyond all other measures, the Imperial Parliament has, and always will have, the final decision on the supremest issue of peace or war. On that, more than on any other, depends the happiness, prosperity—the very existence of a nation. The contribution which war levies is not the contribution which Chancellors of the Exchequer can impose, or Revenue Officers collect. We may haggle as to the quota of pecuniary taxation which Ireland has paid towards our long successes of military operations. We cannot calculate the heroic self-sacrifice, the daring courage, and the brilliant triumphs which her sons have displayed, and achieved, in building up and defending that mighty England which is no less their heritage than ours. Ireland has a moral, legal, constitutional, indefeasible right to say that her voice, and vote, shall be heard on those terrible decisions which may shed the best and bravest blood, and desolate her homes with the suffering and sorrow of the widow and the orphan.”

He further dealt with the pecuniary objections to the scheme :

“ I repeat to you, as I said in the House of Commons, that though the English people might reject Home Rule on grounds of policy, they would never reject it on a miserable pounds, shillings, and pence objection. If England, the wealthiest country in Europe, thinks Ireland, one of the poorest countries in Europe, should manage her own affairs, England will deal with Ireland in a generous spirit.”

And when his eloquence on behalf of his party was spent, when the arguments were left threadbare, and the defences worn thin, then he looked out towards a wider horizon, feeling as he always had felt, that the time for Home Rule was not yet ripe—and as no party politician but as a statesman declared :

“ There are questions with which no party as a party can successfully grapple. There are controversies which can only be finally closed with the stamp and seal of national sanction. There are crises when the hostility of sects, of classes, and even

of races, is swept away by the force of a resistless and all-pervading patriotism. The resources of statesmanship are not yet exhausted, and I dare assert that the most gifted and experienced statesmen of whom this country boasts, no matter to what party they belong, will find no nobler arena for the display of all their energies, and all their abilities, than the settlement of the best mode of governing and conciliating Ireland, and placing on a safe and sure foundation the permanent relations between Britain and the sister Isle."

But it was not of Ireland that Henry Fowler's mind was full in his initial life as a Cabinet Minister. The department which had been entrusted to him embraced many subjects in which he had, by long thought and study, practically specialized. The very words—local self-government—was one of his favourite texts. The Poor Laws and their possible improvement had long occupied his mind. Lady Albinia Donaldson tells what a strong recollection she has of my father's explaining to her the Poor Law system, and thus arousing in her mind an interest which she had not before felt in that question. How much he felt the inadvisability of letting the aged and deserving poor mix with the other less desirable class which frequents our workhouses, and how anxious he was that some system should be introduced which would do away with this injustice. He lived to see the inauguration of Old Age Pensions, which is largely meeting that difficulty in the present day.

No sooner was Henry Fowler appointed to the Local Government Board than he became immersed in all its departments, and took the keenest interest in every subject which it controlled. Sir Walter Foster (the present Lord Ilkeston) had been appointed Secretary to the Local Government Board—his ability and experience as a medical man being of special value in the sanitary and health questions with which the Local Government Board had continuously to deal; and no sooner had they taken office than the country's peace of mind was disturbed by a threatened invasion of cholera, which, however, was ably grappled with and soon stayed.

Once when questioned as to the work of his new office my father explained: "I am the Local Government Board. I wield all

the powers and duties of what was formerly known as the Poor Law Board. I have power over all sanitary matters, the questions concerning contagious diseases—except as regards animals—and epidemics. All the powers and duties concerning the public health and the public improvements; concerning, for instance, artisans' dwellings and the like; local government; local taxation, etc., are placed in my hands. You will, therefore, understand something of my responsibilities."

Sir Horace Munro, K.C.B., who was then my father's private secretary, sends me the following notes of his Local Government Board life, as seen from the inside of that Department, and he also tells me in a personal letter :

"As you know, I came to have a very high regard and affection for your father, but at first I admit I was frightened of him, and of his stern, rather schoolmaster manner. That that was superficial I came before long to realize, and nothing could have been kinder to me than he was on many occasions. His breadth of view in matters of politics and of religion was wholly admirable."

"On the 18th August, 1892, Mr. Fowler succeeded Mr. Ritchie as President of the Local Government Board. The Department, which had been originally established in 1871 by the fusion of the Poor Law Board with the Local Government Act Office, and the attachment to it of various powers and functions belonging to the Home Office and Privy Council, was already a rapidly developing office, and one entitling its President to Cabinet rank. Within a week of Mr. Fowler's entering upon his office, he was confronted with an outbreak of cholera in England, which demanded prompt action. The disease had been observed advancing westwards through Europe, and on the 23rd August, a severe outbreak was reported from Hamburg. On the 25th, the first case reached London, and two days later other cases occurred at Grimsby and Middlesbrough. The President was in constant touch with his technical advisers; inspectors were despatched to the various ports to advise the local authorities, and orders were promptly issued to control the landing of undesirable aliens, and the water on board of suspected ships. The efforts to prevent the spread of infection were successful, and although twenty-nine cases of

cholera occurred in a number of different ports and all of these proved fatal, in no case did the disease extend beyond the person actually arriving from abroad.

" Hawarden Castle,

" September 25th, 1892.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" The Queen has a notion that no ship from Hamburg should be allowed to enter any of our ports during this danger from cholera. Will you kindly furnish me with the proper reply.

" You have found your office not an inactive one, and by the time next Session is over, I think it is likely to place you more prominently in the public view than most other departments.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. E. GLADSTONE.

" A subject to which Mr. Fowler devoted a great deal of personal interest was the production of a Report upon the Local Taxation of England and Wales. A Report of this character had been prepared by Mr. Goschen when he was President of the Poor Law Board in 1871, and Mr. Fowler was desirous of pursuing the investigations further and bringing the subject up to date. With the help of Mr. Dalton (now Sir C. N. Dalton, K.C.M.G.) and the statistical staff of the Department, a valuable and elaborate Report was produced in which a number of comparisons of the figures of 1890-91 with those of 1868 were introduced. The subject was a very congenial one to him, as financial problems in any form possessed for him a great attraction. I think he would always have preferred the Chancellorship of the Exchequer to any other post in the Ministry.

" In the winter of 1892 he was actively engaged in constituting the important Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, of which Lord Aberdare was Charman, and the Prince of Wales a member. This Commission was the first public inquiry into the question which had then been brought to the front by Mr. Chamberlain,

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Mr. Charles Booth, and others, whether some provision other than that made by the poor law might not be secured for the indigent in their old age. Mr. Fowler lived to see this proposal receive legislative shape in the Old Age Pensions Act of 1908, passed by the Government of which he was then a member. In the composition of the Commission Mr. Fowler was in constant communication with Mr. Gladstone and others.

“ Hawarden Castle,

“ Chester,

“ December 2nd, 1892.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ You will already have learned that I enter warmly into the idea of enlisting the Prince of Wales on the Poor Law Commission.

“ But as you observe, this step gives enhanced importance, together with true delicacy perhaps, to the choice of a Chairman. In replying yesterday to Asquith, I mentioned the name of Aberdare as one which might perhaps be considered.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.

“ 10, Downing Street,

“ Whitehall,

“ December 16th, 1892.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I fully accept your judgment about the Archbishop.

“ Might not Playfair be on the Commission, and if he would accept it—would he not be an admirable Vice-Chairman?

“ Yours sincerely,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.

“ In the first winter during which he was President, there was a revival of the ‘ unemployed agitation ’ which had been started a year or two before. Mr. Fowler issued a Circular to Local Authorities urging upon them the desirability of so arranging their programme of works as to secure their execution, as far as

possible, during the winter time, when employment is ordinarily scarce.

“ His great achievement at the Local Government Board was the successful conduct of the Bill (commonly known as the Parish Councils Bill) which was eventually put on the Statute Book as the Local Government Act, 1894. Mr. Gladstone, writing to him in September, 1892, presciently said: ‘ You have found your office not an inactive one, and by the time next Session is over I think it is likely to place you more prominently in the public view than most other departments.’ “ And so it was. Mr. Fowler spent a great deal of time in the early part of 1893 in the preparation of the Bill, and in acquiring a mastery of all its details. In this work he was fortunate to have at his side Sir Hugh Owen, K.C.B., the Permanent Secretary of the Local Government Board, a man who probably possessed a greater knowledge than any living person of the intricacies of the difficult subject upon which he was engaged. The main object of the Bill was to establish Parish Councils in all rural parishes save the smallest, and to democratize the Boards of Guardians and Urban and Rural District Councils by widening the range of qualifications for a seat on those bodies. In a sense the Bill was the logical corollary of the Local Government Act, 1888, passed by the preceding Government for the establishment of County Councils. The Bill was introduced by Mr. Fowler on the 21st March, 1893, but owing to the pressure of other Government business the further proceedings upon it were deferred till the Autumn Session. Four days were spent on the Second Reading, thirty-two days on the Committee stage, and two more days on the Report and Third Reading, and the Bill did not get through the House of Commons till the 12th January, 1894. The debates were constant and protracted, and the conduct of the Bill must have been most exacting upon the Minister in Charge. But throughout he displayed the utmost patience and was rarely, if ever, ruffled, and although the debates were not altogether without heat, he was at their close warmly congratulated from the Opposition side on the courtesy, fairness, and strictly honourable conduct he had consistently displayed. The Bill was debated at some length in the House of Lords, and a

number of amendments were made, and it reached the House of Commons again on 13th February. After four days' debate in the Commons, it was back again in the Lords, and again was returned to the Commons, and this process having been gone through a second time, the Government decided to protest no further, and to allow the Bill to pass. It received the Royal Assent on the 5th March, 1894. It was in connection with the final debate on this Bill that Mr. Gladstone delivered his last speech in the House of Commons, a speech remarkable as well for its vigour and fire as for its attack upon the House of Lords. It was in this debate that Lord Randolph Churchill also made what, I think, was his last speech in the House.

"Mr. Fowler struck me as a man with a somewhat stern exterior overlying a warm heart. He was a great advocate of neatness and method in matters of official routine, and was curiously particular and rather easily ruffled about insignificant details. But though at times somewhat fussy in connection with small matters, no one was less troubled when faced with a real difficulty. He had an exact mind and was extremely ready in getting a grasp of a subject and in expressing himself concisely upon it. He was very fond of the House of Commons, proud of its traditions, tenacious of its customs, and he had that unfailing instinct, which only a real 'House of Commons man' possesses, of knowing how to attract, humour, and deal with that unique assembly. He took great care in preparing any important speech, and would not infrequently dictate the whole to a shorthand writer beforehand. But in delivering his set speeches he usually had little need to refer closely to his notes. His careful preparation of a speech was characteristic of him, for it was in no sense due to lack of fluency, as he never showed any signs in his impromptu speeches of any want of orderly and effective expression.

"He was rather fond of dry proverbial expressions, some of which I especially associate with him. 'Never bid the devil good morning till you meet him'—'A man who never made a mistake never made anything'—'The greatest institution in the British Empire is the waste-paper basket' are some of them.

"He was particularly courteous to his political opponents. One

of his earliest injunctions to me was that every letter from a Member of Parliament, more especially from a Member of the Opposition, if it could not be straightway replied to, was to be formally acknowledged. He had a very strong sense of justice and honesty, and of the dignity of political life. He was very anxious in the patronage he had to bestow, to avoid being influenced by any political bias, and when it was once suggested to him that he should give an appointment to a man in consequence of his claim on the party, he denounced the suggestion in no measured terms."

From his earliest manhood Henry Fowler had been an enthusiastic supporter of municipal institutions. In them he had served the apprenticeship for the weightier matters of political life, and to them he owed a training and an understanding which helped to form his Parish Councils Bill, and to carry it successfully through all the difficulties and opposition of both Houses of Parliament, until it was safely stamped upon the Statute Book. To use his own words in introducing the Bill in the House of Commons on March 21st, 1893 :

" It may be said is there a necessity for these proposed Parish Councils ? We have had the poet's picture and we have had the politician's picture of rural life in this country. After we have allowed for the exaggeration and colouring with which the imagination of the one and the partisanship of the other have invested these pictures, I think we are bound to admit that the one tells us what might be, and what ought to be, but what is not, and the other tells us what ought to be and what can be. The reports of my own department with regard to the sanitary condition of some of the rural parishes in the country disclose a state of things which is a discredit to our civilization. And yet a rural authority has facilities which an urban authority has not. There are a variety of conditions attaching to a town involving an enormous expense to deal with them. None of these conditions are present in a rural district. You want the localities to be supplied with pure water, you want the houses and roads properly drained. You want the air uncontaminated, and the dwellings fit for human

habitation For these purposes I venture to submit there is no better authority than the authority of the people who reside in the localities. You cannot make these improvements by the exercise of mere authority. You have made the change in the great towns, not by the act of the central government, but by the act of the local authorities, working on local lines and spending local money. No man can point to a single instance in which our municipal system has broken down. Look at our great towns, what they were half a century ago, and what they are to-day. What strides they have made forward! No man can look at the things going on in the towns without desiring that the same benefits should be conferred on all parts of the country. I know that there is an idea abroad that the rural labourer is inferior to the artisan of the towns. I do not believe a word of it myself. Surely if the rural labourer is capable of pronouncing an opinion on Imperial questions, he is capable of pronouncing an opinion on rural questions. I do not suppose that these Parish Councils will not make mistakes. Town Councils have made mistakes, County Councils have made mistakes, and there is another assembly I know of that has made mistakes! Parish Councils will make mistakes—they will be extravagant, they will possibly do foolish things—all that is inevitable to any system of popular government. But I am ready to run the risk of my rural friends making mistakes. I believe that, on the whole, they will do a great service not only to the locality in which they live, but to the country of which they form a part."

Having fully explained the suggested added institutions to the system of local government as it already existed in towns, he continued: "I should like to quote a clergyman who has had great experience of rural life in this country, and is familiar with all its conditions. I mean the well-known Rector of Islip, Mr. Fowle. In a letter to the *Times* on August 21st, 1891, he says: 'I am absolutely certain that what the country labourers, and indeed country people generally, desire, is the restoration of that self-government of the villages of which by mere historic accidents they have been deprived. For beyond doubt there is a grievance, felt to be such, that seriously oppresses country life. Why, of all

the people in the world, should the inhabitants of English villages be deprived of municipal life? So far as I know the like condition of things exists nowhere in any civilized country. In France, the Communes—twice as numerous as English parishes—enjoy municipal privileges. In the United States, where so many of the best traditions of old English life still survive, the system of townships is by common consent one of the most valuable and successful of their institutions.'

"We contemplate a three-fold authority—first the local authority, the Parish Council, in the locality where local interests will be fully considered, carefully guarded, and, as I think, wisely promoted. Next we have a larger area in that of the District Council, which will deal not only with local sanitary administration, but also with the administration of the Poor Law. Then next we have the County Council, representing to some extent a Central Authority, and it is in the union of these three institutions, under the control of the supreme legislative authority, that we conceive that the local government of this country can be best administered. We believe that these institutions are not only good for the purposes for which they are devised, but good for the State. I venture to quote John Stuart Mill's opinion 'that of the public education of the citizen local administrative institutions are the chief instruments.' De Tocqueville also said—'Local assemblies of citizens constitute the strength of the nations. A nation may establish a system of free government, but without the spirit of municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty.' With these motives we ask the House to give fair consideration to our proposals. We ask it to regard them not as a party measure. Parties come, and parties go, they triumph and are defeated, in almost regular succession. But side by side with these party conflicts the education of the English people in their duties and in their powers is always progressing. We want to deal with this question, apart from politics, as a question in which all the citizens of the State are interested. We want to establish a local system under which all shall have free play and all shall have fair play, and in which the advantage of all shall be the desire of each. I have the hope and the belief that this new

authority which we are now creating for the first time, purely local in its character, will be successful—that the Parish Council co-operating with the District Council, and the Town Council, and the County Council, and the Great Council of the realm assembled in Parliament, will, by harmonious co-operation, by wise administration, by constantly advancing efficiency, display to successive generations of Englishmen the truest and noblest types of those representative institutions which are the surest foundations and the strongest bulwark of individual freedom and national prosperity.”

The conduct of the Local Government Bill through the House of Commons was a long and laborious task. For forty nights it was discussed in Committee stage, and its author never failed to be on the spot; never failed in his careful consideration of every point, or in his capable dealings with the many amendments which hampered its advance. He had not time to dine on these busy nights, but was content to have a poached egg with his tea, or snatch a hurried meal at any time or any hour.

The Bill itself is now ancient history. Every elector understands its workings, its provisions, its advantages, and it is difficult to realize the amount of work entailed by such a Bill. During its forty-seven days in the House of Commons, and ten in the House of Lords, my father spoke eight hundred and three times, and dealt with fourteen hundred amendments offered to the various clauses. It was considered at that time a revolutionary measure, and was strongly opposed by the influences of Church and property, poaching as it did in village life on the preserves of the parson and the squire. But there were really no revolutionary tendencies in Henry Fowler's mind, no desire to take the privilege of power out of the hands which were worthy to hold and to wield it.

“We do not desire,” he said in the House of Commons, “to exclude the clergyman or the squire from the administration of local affairs. Nor do I believe that any such exclusion will take place. Wherever the clergy and the squire possess the confidence of their fellow inhabitants of the parish, they will be chosen in preference to any other candidates. I should deplore that the Parish Council should be composed of one class of society. We

have no such plan as that proposed in our electoral system anywhere; it does not prevail in Parliament, or in the Town Councils, or in the urban Boards, and now, when we are creating a new constituency, the Parish Council, I believe the common sense and justice which have hitherto actuated our electoral bodies, will not be found wanting in the election of members for the administration of parochial affairs."

He always trusted to the common sense and justice of the public, and as, after a long life full of experience of affairs and of men, he still trusted them, who shall say that his confidence was misplaced?

When the Bill left the House of Commons after its third reading, Henry Fowler took the opportunity of saying these few characteristic words: first in reference to the multiplicity of amendments which had been moved by the Government. "I should be very sorry to see the day when legislation was in the nature of an Imperial or Ministerial edict, brought in to be accepted or rejected by the House *en bloc*. Legislation here is by discussion and amendment. It is necessary that a Bill of this description, extending over so wide an area, and cutting so deep into rural and urban and municipal life, should be discussed very fully by the House, and that Hon. Members should have an opportunity—and they have availed themselves of it—of suggesting various omissions and improvements. If I had assumed the position of not listening to their suggestions, I should have forgotten what was due, not only to the House, but to myself and the country. . . .

"I have to thank hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House, and of all sections of the House, for the kindness and consideration which they have shown me in the conduct of the Bill, and for the great assistance which I have received. So far as I am aware, this Bill has beaten the Parliamentary record so far as the Committee is concerned. This is the forty-first night of its consideration, and if I, the Minister in charge, in the long and weary hours I have had to sit here, have occasionally been betrayed into any expression of impatience or irritation, if I have said anything which was not justified, or have not received amendments with the respect I ought to have paid to them, I trust that

the House will feel that it has not been from a desire in any way to be inconsiderate. I can only plead the excuse of fatigue, mental and physical, and I hope that the House will overlook the fault."

In the House of Lords the Archbishop of Canterbury stated that "Although on its first appearance the Bill seemed to take much from us, this has not so proved in the issue. The Minister who moved the Bill in the other House gave a series of pledges to which we believe he has adhered as far as possible."

There had been a previous correspondence between him and Mr. Gladstone on this subject, as seen from the Prime Minister's letters to my father :

" Hawarden Castle,

" October 4th, 1893.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" Here is a letter from the Archbishop in answer to one from me in which I agreed to his submitting to Sir H. Jenkyns his Bill respecting vestries. I judge from to-day's papers that the Bishop of Worcester takes a more favourable view of the Parish Councils Bill in its bearing on the Church than the Primate. I have not by me the means of judging whether there is anything in the points raised by the Archbishop, and perhaps you will kindly offer any suggestions as to the answer I have to make to him in due time. I am quite sure you will have every disposition to avoid unnecessary strife without putting to hazard essential principles.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. E. GLADSTONE."

" Hawarden Castle,

" October 7th, 1893.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I could not expect or desire any answer beyond that which you have given me and I have accordingly answered the Archbishop in hopeful but general terms.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. E. GLADSTONE."

While the Bill was under discussion in the Lords my father received the following letter from Mr. Chamberlain :

“ Highbury,

“ February 7th, 1894.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I opine that you are sincerely desirous of carrying the Parish Councils Bill. I doubt if all your colleagues are of the same mind. I also am very anxious that its main provisions should become law—although some of my friends may be indifferent, or even hostile. Under these circumstances, if you like to—and can without breach of confidence,—tell me what are, in your private opinion, the vital points, I think that with good will on both sides we might get round the dangerous corner. There must be concessions on both sides if this is to be effected, but if you are not irreconcilable—and the matter is in your hands—I believe I might help you to a settlement.

“ If you do not think so, destroy this note, which is for your private information alone.

“ Yours very truly,

“ J. CHAMBERLAIN.”

To which he wrote this reply :

“ Woodthorne,

“ February 9, 1894.

“ MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,

“ I was in London yesterday and returned here to-day. I understand that some amendments which may modify alterations made in Committee are to be proposed in report, which is to be taken on Monday, and until that stage is passed and the Bill has left the Lords, it is difficult to form an opinion as to the real effect of what has been done. After the House of Commons has disagreed, or otherwise dealt with the Lords' amendments, and the points at issue are all ascertained, I shall be in a better position to discuss the situation. At present I should place in the foremost rank Allotments,

Secular Charities, London Vestries and use of School-rooms, but I hear that further amendments on the Allotments and Charities are to be made on Monday. I shall hope to see you next week, and I will tell you what are vital. In the meantime I thank you for your kind note, which I shall of course regard as secret and confidential, as is this reply.

"Yours very sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

Mr. Chamberlain replied next day :

"Highbury,

"February 10th, 1894.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"Thanks. I shall see you on Tuesday. But recollect that everything depends on the action of the Unionists in the House of Commons. If they go solid for an amendment, the Lords, I expect, will stand firm. We have a meeting of the Liberal Unionist party on Thursday to consider our action.

"I do not believe the Lords will give up their amendments on charities and use of rooms, though they may possibly be further amended. But they touch the Church, and churchmen are sensitive just now.

"Yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

The next month was occupied in the Bill's journeys between the two Houses of Parliament. In January my father wrote to Lord Ilkeston, who was then Sir Walter Foster :

"L. G. B.

"15th January, 1894.

"MY DEAR FOSTER,

"I cannot let the passage of our Bill be completed in the House of Commons without conveying to you my cordial thanks for the valuable, unflinching and pleasant assistance which you have so ungrudgingly rendered to me in my arduous task. I know that on several points you would

have preferred to see the provisions of the Bill more in accordance with some of the views of some of our friends behind us, but you have so fairly recognized the difficulties of the Government, and the wisdom of obtaining substantial and unprecedented advantages, and you have so loyally discharged your duty as a member of the Government, that it would be the height of ingratitude if I did not express my appreciation of your conduct. The Bill, even if the Lords mangle it moderately, is so startling an advance, that every true Liberal must rejoice that our Government, amidst all their difficulties, have been able to propose, and so far as the House of Commons is concerned, pass such a measure. In thanking you I must ask you to overlook any momentary irritation which a Minister (tired physically and mentally) cannot help expressing, and which though intended against the foe or 'the candid friend' below the gangway, sometimes appears as if it was directed against his colleagues, although of course, nothing is further from his mind. Wishing you a good rest and with kind regards to Lady Foster (who I hope is satisfied with what we have done for the Ladies),

" I am

" Yours sincerely,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

On March 1st, 1894, the Bill came back to the House of Commons for the last time. The Government accepted, as they were bound to accept unless they forfeited the Bill, the essential of the Lords' amendments. Mr. Gladstone delivered his last speech in the House of Commons on this Bill, but the purport of his speech was the mutilating and destructive power of the Upper House over Liberal measures, to which the House of Commons, as representative of the country, had assented. It was a fighting speech, the last spark of fire struck from the anvil of the political forge by the veteran statesman.

On March 5th the Local Government Act received the Royal Assent.

" Nothing," wrote the late Mr. W. T. Stead, " can rob Mr.

Fowler of the right to be considered a great administrative reformer. He was but a year and a half at the Local Government Board, but in that brief period he made his mark in every parish, in every union, in every county of England. In face of unprecedented difficulties, difficulties occasioned quite as much by the over-zeal of intemperate supporters, as by the opposition of his political opponents—he succeeded in carrying through Parliament a measure, conferring for the first time upon all rural householders, without distinction of sect, sex, or station, an equal right to share in the administration of their own affairs. English rural government has long been a byword and a reproach for its flagrant defiance of every principle of modern democracy and of scientific bureaucracy. Out of the midst of this chaos of anachronism and confusion Mr. Fowler set himself to evoke order and system, and to replace the oligarchy of the squire and the parson by the authority of the elected representatives of the whole nation. That he has succeeded even his political opponents will admit. The Parish Councils Act is the work of Mr. Fowler, and he has as much right to have his name associated with the great reform of our local government as Mr. Forster with the Education Act or Sir Robert Peel with the Repeal of the Corn Laws. For good or evil it marks an era in the development of self-government in England. It is in some senses the crowning of the edifice of democratic reconstruction. Mr. Fowler's speech in introducing the Bill was an ideal presentation of a great and complex subject."

Surveying the whole of the campaign in which the Opposition gave notice of 1,025 amendments and actually moved 402; in which the Government and the Liberal party gave notice of 477 amendments and moved 217, in which my father spoke over 800 times and never once, as was his pride to recall, moved the closure, and which occupied altogether 57 sittings, Mr. Stead further adds: "The multiplication of amendments was hardly-disguised obstruction. But Mr. Fowler never lost his temper, and continued to meet obstruction and critics from first to last with the urbanity and courtesy which have always distinguished him. If you cannot make a revolution with rose-water neither can you bounce a great administrative reform through Parliament. Mr.

Fowler was patient, courteous, watchful, conciliatory. More than once his wild men jeopardized the success of the measure. But he stood to his guns, insisted upon meeting critics fairly, and in the end he had his reward. The Act was placed upon the Statute Book, and in December the whole country will be covered from end to end with the Councils instituted by Fowler's Act."

On the passing of the Bill my father received the following letter from Sir William Harcourt :

" 11, Downing Street, S.W.

" March 2nd, 1894.

" DEAR FOWLER,

" I was not able to see you in the hurry of the close of proceedings yesterday to congratulate you on the final and highly successful passage of your Bill.

" You are the skilful sportsman who has brought your game to the bag.

" Your labour has been great and your temper under some provocation has been admirable, and you will have a great reward in having your name ever connected with what I am convinced will prove by far the most important and beneficial agrarian revolution of our time. It will take some years to develop its full results, but in the end, they will be found to be enormous, both in their social and political effect.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. V. HARCOURT."

And a little later from Lord Rosebery :

" Foreign Office,

" March 22nd, 1893. "

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I must send a line of congratulations on your consummate success of last night. No one is more pleased than I.

" Your Bill will do more, I suspect, to strengthen and popularize the Government than anything else yet or likely to be achieved.

" Yours truly,

" R."

My father hoped great things from the Parish Councils Bill. He said no purely constitutional change had ever excited so much interest, but at the same time he foresaw that, as it had been with municipal Corporations, so it would be with parish Councils. It would take some time before the electors realized the full significance of the powers with which they had been armed. He realized, though perhaps not to the full, seeing that he had never lived in a country village, the lethargy of a rural population, its suspicion of benefits, its distrust of changes, its slowness of assimilation. "Your parish councils," suggested Mr. Stead to him, "will only be the old vestries over again—the squire and the parson will find that instead of being disestablished, their power has only received consecration at the hands of the Democracy."

"Consecration perhaps," replied Henry Fowler, "but at the same time they receive inspiration and incentive. If you are right it will only be the county councils over again. Nothing was more remarkable than the way in which the magistrates of quarter sessions appeared as county councillors. But although the men remained the same, a wondrous change had come, and is coming, over the spirit of their dreams. The sense of responsibility to their constituents is transforming the county justices. The same man who is now a county councillor acts in an altogether different spirit from that in which he acted when he was irresponsible to any electorate. As it has been, so it will be. I bear no ill-will to the squire and the parson. I should be glad enough to see their authority confirmed by the vote of their fellow-villagers; but the mere fact that such confirmation is necessary will be sufficient to change their spirit, and to secure that they will act in the interest and in the service of the people."

"I hope," continued my father, "that the electors will see to it that the efficiency and honesty of the new governing bodies are put first, and that other considerations, whether of sect or of party, are subordinated to the supreme end of doing something practical to improve the condition of the people. I always have attached greater importance to social and administrative reforms, and to all questions dealing with the condition of the people, than to the purely party political issues. I look forward to the operation of

the Parish Councils Bill with great hopes in this direction. It will lead to a betterment of the condition of the people, making their lives happier, especially among the agriculturists. I belong to that school which attaches most importance to these questions—shorter hours of work, better wages, more leisure for recreation and a larger share of the enjoyments of life generally. These things are more important than mere constitutional changes, or what Lord Beaconsfield called the dry bones of party.”

During the progress of the Bill he wrote to my mother :

“ Windsor Castle,

“ Monday, December 11th, 1893.

“ MY DEAREST LOVE,

“ I know you will like to have a note from me here, so in the waiting before dinner I drop you a line. Asquith is my fellow guest so far as the Cabinet is concerned. I am glad to get away from the House for a night.

“ The shocking explosion in Paris has naturally caused alarm, but our police and other officers are keenly on the alert. The few anarchists who showed themselves yesterday in London had to be protected by the police from the fury of the people—this is a good sign.

“ I am afraid my Bill will not progress much to-night as there is another debate on the adjournment of the House and I hear a similar motion is to be made to-morrow night; our people (I am glad to say) are getting alarmed at the prospects of the Bill which they have so idiotically treated.

“ With abundance of love to Nell, Edith, Ernest and yourself.

“ I am,

“ Yours ever,

“ H. H. F.”

And after it was passed he wrote the following letter to the step-daughter of his late sister :

“ Local Government Board,

“ March 10th, 1894.

“ MY DEAR LENA,

“ Thank you for your kind note. It has been a constant sorrow to me during the passage of the Local Government

Bill that your mother was not here to watch the progress of the contest, and it is a keen drawback to the pleasure of my present promotion that she does not share it.

“ With kind love to all,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

On May 16th, 1894, my father's sixty-fourth birthday, an illuminated address was presented to him by the Liberal Five Hundred of East Wolverhampton, to congratulate him on the passing of the Parish Councils Act during his Presidency of the Local Government Board. On this occasion he described his work with re-kindling of the fire of enthusiasm, which had been damped down by the wear and tear of the long conciliatory effort which was required to engineer the Bill through the many dangers of friends and foes in the House of Commons, and to save its life after the heavy handling of the House of Lords. But though hidden under the calm and cautious statesmanship which alone could have pressed and passed the Bill, the enthusiasm for it never died out of the heart of its author. For no great work is ever done without enthusiasm at its root. But when the strain and stress of that campaign was over, and the Act launched into the practical legislation of the land, then Henry Fowler spoke again straight from his heart about it. It is now so much a matter of everyday life in rural England that any account of it may read as stale and ancient history, and yet this book would hardly be complete if he were not in it to tell out his facts and his figures, and to describe in his own words the great reform which will ever be associated with his name.

“ This Act,” he said, “ effects the completion of our great system of local self-government. It establishes in every rural parish in England and Wales (and there are upwards of thirteen thousand such parishes), a parish meeting, to be held in the evening so that all the parishioners may be able to attend, where they may discuss and regulate the affairs of the parish. Each parishioner can only give one vote. The Act establishes a parish council which is the representative body, in every parish with a population of

upwards of three hundred. With less than that population they manage their own affairs at a parish meeting; with more than that, at their parish councils. These parish councils are elected on the principle of one man one vote, and they deal with the parish properties, its officers, its charities, and all matters relating, in one word, to the life of the parish. They will also deal with the sanitary arrangements of the parish, its educational arrangements, that is so far as concerns the establishment of free libraries. The most important feature is that a parish council can acquire land for public purposes and especially for allotments. It has power to purchase or hire land. If this cannot be done by agreement the council can go to the Local Government Board, and the authorities can get an order and, without any of the enormous expenditure and delay of Private Acts of Parliament, which practically prohibit the acquisition of land for this purpose, the order can be made; and one of the Board of Trade officials determines the cost of purchase or of hiring. We are going to sweep away the old local boards of health and rural sanitary authorities, which in my judgment, have not discharged their duties to the good of their parishes, and elect in their places six hundred and fifty rural municipalities, rural councils, who will possess just the same powers as the other urban district councils, so far as is applicable to purely rural districts. The chairmen of these urban district councils are, during their term of office, to be magistrates, and therefore you have in that way fourteen hundred elected magistrates just as you have in the case of mayors, who by virtue of their office, are elected to the judicial bench. Further we remove all disqualifications of either sex or marriage. Women can vote and women can be voted for. We have reformed the Board of Guardians. Ex-officio and nominated Guardians will cease to act, and guardians will be elected on the system of one man one vote, and by ballot. We have also reformed the vestries of London. We have put them on the level of the urban or municipal councils and have made changes in the mode and extent of voting, which is one step to the thorough reform of London local administration, but the greatest step yet taken in the reform of these authorities. All this is an enormous change in the local government of this

country. It is a subject the more you think about the more it grows upon you, the more wide-reaching you see it is; and it is only confidence in the common sense of the English people—that is the confidence which I hold unfalteringly, and which a man in such a position is hardly justified in doubting—confidence in the people and in their capacity to work local institutions, and their instinct to assume self-government, that will justify so great and vast an experiment as this measure is. I believe it will be a great success. It has conferred upon the people of this country great rights and real responsibilities, especially in rural parishes, and our desire is that the right men should be elected and come to the front, and do the work they have done so well in the school-board. I have a strong belief that these institutions, not confined simply to one branch of administration, but touching the people at all parts of their daily lives, will let the people see that the work is done well and by the proper men. I also believe that the work will be done very economically. At all events, we have granted the masses of the people of this country free institutions, and have equalized the opportunities of all; and our intention and our hope is that by the instrumentality of the powers we have placed in the hands of the representatives of the people, the condition of the latter's daily life will be materially and greatly improved.

* * * * * * *

“There are new problems with which the Liberal party of to-day and of the future will have to deal. The condition of the people—their moral and material condition—is one of the problems for the statesmanship of the future, and no Government, and no party, deserves the confidence of the British Electorate, which does not give a foremost place in its legislative and administrative programme to those measures which will promote the comfort, the health, the prosperity, the happiness, the well-being and the well-doing of the masses of the people.”

In speaking in Wolverhampton at the end of the year in which the Parish Councils Bill became law, Henry Fowler said, “That he believed the elections to those councils, which were then taking



FOWLER'S FINE SINGLE-HANDED RUN.

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place, would confirm his strong and well-founded faith that the hereditary common sense of Englishmen and English women would work that great Act for the common good of the whole community. They had slain Bumbledom and Vestrydom, and no one shed a tear over their graves. They believed that class would co-operate with class, that they would meet together on a common platform for a common object. They wanted to see all classes upon these new representative bodies; they wanted all interests to be there—the wise man and the silly man, the patriots and the faddists; they wanted that little village parliament to be a microcosm of the village; and he believed that it would not only be a great boon to the community, but it would be a great educating machinery; and in the end, that the happy blending of cautious courage, of fair, even-handed justice, of strong patriotism and high-minded morality, which after all were the proud characteristics of the great bulk of the English legislation and English administration, would be found in all their strength and vigour in the history, and actions, and procedure, and success of these new Parliaments. The Local Government Act, the parish councils in seven thousand parishes, the parish meetings in thirteen thousand parishes, the reformed administration of London Guardians and London Vestries, the bringing together the whole mass of people equally to enjoy the same benefits the more favoured citizens in the great municipalities had enjoyed, that was a monument more enduring than marble of what the present Government had achieved.”

Though the Parish Councils Bill was his main work of that Session, my father spent a great deal of time with Sir William Harcourt at the Treasury. His old chief took him into his counsels with regard to national finance, and claimed for the public service the exceptional financial ability which Henry Fowler possessed. Mr. Stead wrote in the *Review of Reviews* :

“As one of the financial *illuminati* of the Cabinet, Mr. Fowler was attached to Sir William Harcourt as one of the inner circle charged with the preparation of the Budget of the Session. He rendered good service to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and confirmed his title to be regarded as the next keeper of the purse of John Bull.”

The Budget of this Session was an epoch-making one. In it a new chapter of taxation was begun, and many of the old grievances, which my father had denounced from his youth, were swept away. He had long objected to the unfair distinction between land and money in death and succession duties, which this Budget equalized.

The necessity for that increase of revenue which the Budget met Henry Fowler explained to his constituents :

" We believe it is our duty to see—we believe it is the desire of the people of this country—that there shall be no question or doubt as to the supremacy of the British naval power. We are determined to get our Navy up to a point which will put its supremacy beyond all question, and though we deplore this mad rivalry of armaments which is the curse of Europe at the present time, which is impoverishing its resources and enfeebling its power, we nevertheless will not be behind. We cannot play with the interest of so vast an Empire as ours, and we are determined to do our duty to the people of the country in reference to the Navy. The money has to be found and must be found by taxation.

" Sir William has submitted three modes of raising that money. First, he has proposed a great increase in the death duties, by putting real property on the same footing as personal property, and graduating these duties on the principle which is based upon a true rule of taxation—namely, the equality of sacrifice. Secondly," he pointed out, " the Budget increased the tax on beer and spirits; and lastly it put a penny on the income tax; but it made certain alterations in the former system which pressed so heavily on such property as land and houses, and graduated the tax from a starting-point of one hundred and sixty pounds a year, below which all incomes should be exempted. It would," he continued, " require about a million and a quarter to make up the deductions mentioned, but those are the proposals which the Government think fair to the small tax-payer of this country. My own opinion is that not only the Liberal party, but the Conservative party, believe in the great reform which has placed Sir William Harcourt's name amongst those of the most distinguished financiers of the present day."

CHAPTER XVI

1894—1895

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA

“Power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring for good thoughts (though God accept them) yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place as vantage and commanding ground.”—BACON.

IN March, 1894, Mr. Gladstone held his last Cabinet, the story of which moving scene has been told so truly and so simply in his “Life.” He resigned his timeworn trust and recognized at last that “the night cometh when no man can work.” All his colleagues, whether new or old, bowed their heads under his last words in the Cabinet—“God bless you all,” and felt a personal sense of loss in his leaving. But history halts not for any man, and the Queen sent for Lord Rosebery to fill the vacant place and take up the work laid down. A slight reconstruction of the Cabinet was necessary, and my father was appointed Secretary of State for India under the new Prime Minister. He received the following letter from his old chief on his appointment:

“10, Downing Street,

“Whitehall,

“March 7th, 1894.

“MY DEAR FOWLER,

“I thank you for your very kind letter. Fresh in my memory is the recollection of having for the first time heard you speak at Birmingham, when I was the guest of

Chamberlain, and we had among other occurrences a colossal meeting in the rink.

“ I remember the impression made upon my mind by your speech, and by either one or two others, and was to the following effect : if one of the provinces is so rich in speaking power what ought not the centre to be. The centre has since made good its claim to you, and with that excellent effect which we have last witnessed in your general conduct of the debate on the Local Government Bill. I am glad that my retirement has made room for your receiving a distinguished recognition.

“ There is much I should like to say about India, but I write from my bed and this spares you the infliction. The sum of the matter would come to this—The transfer to Parliament was probably inevitable, and has been in certain respects most beneficial : but it has not in my view been successful all round, and I am by no means sure that all those who work the Government in India (I do not mean the Viceroy), are under as effective a control as formerly.

“ Believe me, sincerely yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

The above was in reply to this letter which he had received from my father :

“ DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

“ Although I cordially concurred in the tribute of respect and regret which was tendered to you on behalf of all your colleagues at the last meeting of the Cabinet, I must ask you to allow me individually to convey to you an expression of my own feelings.

“ I have had the honour of occupying posts in the 2nd and 3rd of your Administrations, and of being a member of the Cabinet in the 4th; and in that capacity you entrusted to my care the conduct through Parliament of one of the most important measures of recent times. The kindness and the consideration which I have uniformly received at

your hands, as well as the honour of being allowed to share in your counsels, will be amongst the most treasured memories of my political life. May I add the hope that you may be spared for many years, and that your old colleagues may enjoy to the fullest extent your confidence and approval.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

My father's promotion was deservedly popular. The invariable justice of public opinion approved, and the sun shone for him more brightly upon the period when he was at the India Office than during any other portion of his career. The intense interest of that great Department consumed and claimed his whole intellectual being, and the great demand called for his great supply of power in response. He learned the lore of the India Office, he grasped its technique, he mastered its material, and he dominated its counsels, in an amazingly short time.

The letters of congratulation he received on his appointment have been treasured by him as of great value, and not least those which came from the other side.

From the present Lord Curzon of Kedleston :

“ Carlton Club,

“ March 7th, 1894.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ May I be permitted to congratulate you on your translation to what always seems to me (next to the Foreign Office) to be the most important and interesting of the high Government posts. It is also one of the offices in which, more or less irrespective of party, a continuity of policy and tradition prevails, and in which it is frequently possible for political antagonists to take each other into confidence and to act in practical harmony.

“ You will bring to the work, if I may venture to say so, not merely the service of your great abilities, but the exercise of what is, in regard to India, a probably as yet unfettered

judgment, and from this two-fold advantage both the Office and the Government of India should be the gainers.

"I wish you for your sake (perhaps not for mine), a longer tenure of office than I had.

"Yours truly,

"GEORGE CURZON."

And from another opponent :

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"Will you allow me to offer you my sincere and hearty congratulations upon your promotion to the high dignity of a Secretary of State.

"I hope this event happening in your case may tend to induce you to support the levelling up of all the Departments, so that our best public men may have no temptation to forsake those Departments which are now, as I venture to think, improperly considered as being subordinate !

"Sincerely yours,

"WALTER H. LONG."

From an old colleague and friend, Sir Horace Davey, as he was then, before being appointed a Lord of Appeal :

"86, Brook Street,

"March 10th, 1894.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I was going to write to you to congratulate you on the skill and patience with which you piloted the Parish Councils Bill through Parliament—when Mr. Gladstone's resignation was announced, and I learnt in due course that you were transferred to the India Office. I congratulate you, and the public service, on your being appointed a Secretary of State. Your great financial knowledge and sound judgment will be of the greatest advantage to India, at the present time. Pray believe that although I am laid on my shelf I have the

warmest interest in the success of the party and of my old friends—and regret that I do not see more of them.

“Yours very sincerely,
“HORACE DAVEY.”

And another :

“H.M. Office of Works,
“March 6th, 1894.

“MY DEAR FOWLER,

“My hearty congratulations to you on your appointment to the India Office. You have earned it to the full by the splendid work you have done in the Local Government Bill, and which will be a monument of your skill and knowledge of the subject. If you had been listened to, the discussions would have been curtailed by some weeks.

“Yours very truly,
“G. SHAW-LEFEVRE.”

From the Speaker :

“DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“Permit me to congratulate you upon the recognition of your great services and upon your acceptance of an Office of the highest interest and importance.

“Believe me to remain,
“Sincerely yours,
“ARTHUR W. PEEL.”

From the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell :

“Woburn,
“Tuesday Evening.

“MY DEAR FOWLER,

“‘Chesney’s Indian Polity’ is the very book you want for a bird’s-eye view of the whole subject. It was stupid of me to forget it to-day. My father (aged eighty-seven) has just reminded me that I told him that you were the coming man of the Eighty Parliament.

“Yours in haste,
“G. W. E. RUSSELL.”

From Sir Henry Longley :

" Charity Commission,

" Whitehall,

" March 7th, 1894.

" DEAR MR. FOWLER,

" I suppose that I may now take it as certain that yours will not be the hand to pilot the Local Government Bill on its way into practical operation, and though I cannot but regret on public grounds that this should be so, I must ask to be allowed to congratulate you on the accession of dignity which brings about this change. I am afraid that I have been of late the embodiment of much that has given you endless trouble, but at any rate, I have had special opportunities of forming an opinion that had the course of the Bill been more completely in your hands and those of your subordinates, a good deal that has happened might have been spared.

" With many thanks for your unvarying kindness during a very trying time of pressure on yourself, and with every wish for success in your new post,

" Believe me, very truly yours,

" HENRY LONGLEY."

Not only personal friends but different public bodies showered congratulations upon him. The Incorporated Law Society expressed in the form of a resolution their congratulations on his appointment, which was the first instance of so high an office being held by a solicitor.

Sir Arthur Godley (now Lord Kilbracken) was at that time Permanent Under-Secretary for India, and of him my father was always an enthusiastic admirer. I have often heard him quote Mr. Gladstone's expressed opinion of his former private secretary that " there was no post in the Civil Service in this country which Arthur Godley was not fit to fill " ; and he always avowed that his own mastery of Indian affairs was in a great measure due to

the initiation and instruction which he received from so able and distinguished a man as Lord Kilbracken. To him I am indebted for the following recollections of my father's Indian Secretaryship of State :

" In the spring of 1894, when Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister, Lord Kimberley, who was then for the third time filling the office of Secretary of State for India, went to the Foreign Office, and was succeeded by Mr. Fowler. The new Secretary of State had not had any experience, either in his public career or otherwise, which could be considered as a special qualification for his duties at the India Office, with two very important exceptions, namely, his knowledge of finance, and his thorough familiarity with the temper and moods of the House of Commons, of which he had made a special study. A day or two before he made his appearance at the India Office, he asked me to come and see him at the Local Government Board Office, and talked to me at considerable length, asking numerous questions about the nature of the duties which he was about to undertake. He expressed a good deal of diffidence, which I am sure was genuine, about his fitness for the work of that particular office. But I think that even as he talked to me, a considerable portion of it gradually disappeared ; and, by the time that he had been for a few weeks in his new office, few signs of it, or none, were visible. Certainly there was no good ground for it. At this distance of time (eighteen years), I cannot recall many details of Mr. Fowler's administration, which lasted only about fifteen months, other than those which are now public property. I remember him, chiefly, as an unusually good business man, who worked hard, and made himself thoroughly master of the questions which came before him. He was generally quick in arriving at a decision, but he was at the same time remarkably cautious : his habit of looking all round a question, and of considering consequences, including the effect upon Parliament and on public opinion of any proposed course of action, was one of his most marked characteristics.

" Mr. Fowler—to give him the name under which he acted as Secretary of State—was pre-eminently efficient as the representative in Parliament of the Department over which he presided.

Though by no means given to over-confidence in himself, he always claimed to have made it his business to know the House of Commons, both collectively and individually; and he seemed invariably to foresee by what looked like instinct, but was really the result of long experience and careful observation, the line that the House would take upon any given question, and the form in which a proposal could be best presented for acceptance. He seemed also to have made it his business to take the measure of every Member of Parliament who was at all likely to take part in the discussion of Indian affairs, or in addressing questions to the Secretary of State. It was a frequent amusement to me, when we were speaking of any forthcoming Parliamentary business, to observe how he dealt with them, treating some, who to me were comparatively unknown and insignificant, with deference and respect, while others, bearing perhaps well-known names, were brushed aside, with, 'Oh! I shall know very well how to deal with him,' or some such expression; and I am bound to add that, so far as my observation went, he was in those matters always right.

"Like all good administrators, Mr. Fowler understood the art of devolution, and did not attempt to do all the work of the Office himself. He put a generous confidence in his subordinates, and never failed to give them his hearty support whenever they needed and deserved it. His relations with his Council were most friendly and pleasant, and his thorough knowledge of the current work, combined with his gifts of ready speech and practical good sense, gave him his full share of influence in their debates and decisions. His financial knowledge, of which I have already spoken, was of the greatest advantage to himself, as Secretary of State, and to the public service, during his tenure of office: but, curiously enough, it was not until after he had ceased to be Secretary of State that his chief work for Indian finance was undertaken and carried through. No one, who was not concerned with the Government of India before the adoption of a gold standard for that country, can have a conception of the boon which was conferred upon the Indian taxpayers, and on the Government which represented them, by the reform which resulted from the labours of Mr. Fowler's

Committee on the Indian Currency. The ground had been prepared by Lord Herschell's Committee, which sat in 1892-3, and by the closing of the Indian Mints in 1893. But it remained for the large and important Committee, which sat five years later, presided over by Sir Henry Fowler, to complete the work of reform, and to elaborate the system which has since been introduced and has worked with perfect smoothness and success. Its success is, in fact, so great as to exceed its own greatness ; and it is now difficult to recall to memory a state of things under which a fall of a penny in the gold value of silver was hardly less an object of dread to the Government of India than a war, a pestilence, or a famine. With this great and beneficent change Sir Henry Fowler's name must always be associated.

"To the most memorable incident of Mr. Fowler's career at the India Office I need only allude very briefly, because it will no doubt be amply described in its proper place : I mean, of course, his triumphant vindication of the action of the Government in the matter of the Cotton Duties. The attacking party, led by Sir Henry James, and supported by the unanimous feeling of Lancashire, was strong and determined : the question was one in which the voting was not likely to follow the strict party lines, and it was thought more than likely that Ministers might find themselves in a minority. I well remember the gloomy anticipations which prevailed at the India Office—for in this case a defeat of the Government meant a defeat of Indian interests and rights—and I recollect that the Secretary of State, though he took the matter very seriously, was confident throughout. In the result he was, of course, more than justified. I can remember several speeches in the House of Commons which were greater in oratory ; but I cannot remember one which had such a striking practical effect as that which he delivered upon this occasion. It saved the Government : it produced an admirable effect in India ; and it was a great personal triumph.

"I cannot conclude these recollections without saying that my own relations with Mr. Fowler were particularly agreeable and friendly, and that it has always been a pleasure to me to remember the time during which he was my chief."

Immediately on his appointment Henry Fowler received the following letters from the Earl of Elgin, the Viceroy, Lord Harris, the Governor of Bombay, and Lord Wenlock, the Governor of Madras :

“ Government House,

“ Calcutta,

“ March 7th, 1894.

“ MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ The telegraph has announced that you have accepted the appointment of Secretary of State for India. I am afraid that I may have anticipated matters to some extent in addressing to you the private telegram which I found it necessary to send you yesterday, but I hope you will excuse that, and allow me to renew the congratulations with which it began. I hope also that you will allow me to continue this correspondence on the same footing as I have been using with Lord Kimberley, who, before I came out, requested me to write to him with perfect freedom. I have not had the opportunity of the same personal intercourse with you, but I hope you will allow me to use the same frankness in these letters ; I have already found it to be of great importance and value to anyone holding this office.

“ Under these circumstances I do not propose to enter into matters in general. Indeed at the present moment I may say that every interest is swallowed up in matters of finance. We have indeed some apprehension about the expedition into the Abor country, having heard by telegram that the main body have been cut off from their supplies, and that a post which was in charge of the reserve of rations has been attacked and destroyed.

“ As regards finance, everything is in the most critical position ; I doubt indeed if the position has a parallel. As it stands the Import Duty Bill, if every one were free, would not, I suppose, secure a single vote. When it does come in every unofficial member will vote against it. The Members of the Executive will of course vote for it, although they

will do so under protest. In the case of the official members outside the Executive, it seems to be rather uncertain as to how the ruling which applies to members of the Executive comes in, and, if even one deserted us, I believe it is possible that it might come to the use of the casting vote of the President, and I must say that I not only dislike that idea exceedingly, but I think that it might be a somewhat dangerous precedent. Again, if the Bill by any chance is recommitted—and that, it has been arranged, is to be the form of amendment that is to be proposed—what is to happen? I can only hope that the decision which we are promised from home tomorrow will be distinct, even if we are not able to give way. I, for my own part, did not like asking for a reconsideration, or for the alternative proposed in the last official telegram, which, in my opinion, would prolong the controversy in regard to the Cotton Duties and render the Budget arrangements more difficult, even if eventually it was proposed to impose them; but really looking at the matter as a whole, the policy of the present Bill is almost indefensible. If other Imperial duties are to be imposed, why is not this one, and is it not excepted from the consideration of home interests, and home interests alone? I do not think that it can be argued that it is more distinctly protective, especially if you insist, as you may insist, upon Excise Duties, and the opinion seems prevalent that an Import Duty on Cotton Goods would not really affect the volume of trade. On the other hand the money is absolutely required, and I am assured that there is no other source of revenue which would not be both inadequate and dangerous.

“I only wish to add that I entirely appreciate the difficulties which face you at home, but I think I should fail in my duty if I did not represent to you what appears to me would be the effect here of allowing them to control a decision.

“I am, my dear Mr. Fowler,

“Yours sincerely,

“ELGIN.”

To which the Secretary of State replied :

“ India Office, Whitehall,

“ March 30th, 1894.

“ MY DEAR LORD ELGIN,

“ I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th inst., and to thank you for your congratulations. I am most anxious that you should continue to correspond with me on the same footing that Lord Lansdowne and yourself have done with Lord Kimberley, and I shall be under a great obligation to you if you will, in the most unreserved manner, communicate your views to me on all the questions of Indian policy and administration.

“ I have carefully watched the telegraphic reports of the debates of your Council on finance, and I gather that Kimberley's last telegram smoothed matters to some extent and that the Budget has now virtually passed. I have no desire to hamper either yourself, or your Council, with respect to Import Duties. The only point to which the Government and the House of Commons will, in my opinion, attach vital importance, is the question of protective Duties. I am struck by the feeling in India in favour of taxation. I can quite understand a preference for indirect over direct taxation, but, in this case, a section of public opinion seems as keenly desirous to tax cotton imports as, under ordinary circumstances, they would oppose fresh taxation. This naturally suggests an *arrière pensée*, and the possibility that the proposed taxation may operate to the advantage of the local trade.

“ An increase in the price of cotton goods will follow any Import Duty. Such increase will be paid by the consumer in every case ; but if no Excise Duty is levied on the native manufacture, the equivalent increase in price will be put into the pocket of the native manufacturers, and not into the Indian Exchequer. The reversal of all sound fiscal policy will not be adopted by the House of Commons. But if your Council are prepared to put all cotton on the same footing as

far as taxation is concerned, then I think (I am, of course, speaking without consultation with my colleagues) that there will be little difficulty in dealing with the Import Duties. The other duties to which the same principle should be applied are insignificant compared with the Cotton Duties

"I shall be glad to hear from you as to the steps to be taken to encourage Railway Extension. I am of opinion that a very large construction of new railways in India is a policy that would do more to improve the trade and prosperity of the inhabitants of India, than, perhaps, any other policy which the Government could adopt. No effort will be spared by me to support the vigorous and prompt carrying out of this policy.

"Have you considered the question of the present amount of gold hoarded in India, and whether there is any practicable scheme of attracting these hoards either to Government, or to reproductive interest?

"I am, my dear Lord Elgin,

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

From Bombay Lord Harris wrote :

"Bombay,

"9th March, 1894.

"MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

"At the moment of writing I have no official intimation of your having taken over from Lord Kimberley, but as you will have done so before this mail reaches England I take the earliest opportunity of presenting myself—there being no one to do it for me—to you.

"You will be so occupied with matters of Imperial moment, financial, foreign, military, and administrative, that I will not venture to trouble you with our humble economical affairs without your leave.

"The feeling as to the exclusion of the excise of cotton goods from the Tariff is very strong and growing stronger.

Meetings are being called in many towns, the great majority of which have a very vague idea of what the object is, except that they are 'agin the Government.'

"However, you will fortunately have the benefit of far more reliable opinions than mine; so I will not trouble you further. Hoping that I may be honoured with your occasional advice, as I was with that of your predecessor,

"Believe me, dear Mr. Fowler,

"Yours very truly,

"HARRIS."

My father replied :

"India Office,

"Whitehall,

"30th March, 1894.

"MY DEAR LORD HARRIS,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of, and to thank you for your letter of the 9th inst.

"I hope you will write to me unreservedly and fully on all matters affecting your Government, and I can assure you of my constant sympathy and support in your administration.

"The only question at issue of importance with regard to the Cotton Duties is whether they are to be protective or are to apply to all cotton whether manufactured or imported. I do not think that any House of Commons will sanction Protective Duties. If your manufacturers are prepared to submit to an excise duty (as I see one of them in the Legislative Council said they were), I do not apprehend any difficulty with reference to this controversy.

"I shall be glad to hear from you with reference to the Railway Extension—what you consider desirable, what you consider practicable—and whether there is any prospect of attracting Native Capital to this form of investment?

"I am, dear Lord Harris,

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

Lord Wenlock wrote also from Madras :

“ Government House,
“ Madras,
“ March 8th, 1894.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ The telegrams have announced to us the changes which have just taken place in the Cabinet, by which we learn that you have taken over the India Office.

“ Would you please let me know what you would like me to do in the matter of correspondence ?

“ At present we are jogging along very quietly. We have no anxiety as to famine or any similar disaster. The worst we have to contemplate is the reduction we have to make in our Public Works Budget—which is a great misfortune—but I hope it will be only temporary.

“ The Government of India has called upon us for three lakhs, and as we had budgeted up very close to our balance we have to apply the knife to certain items. I am afraid, too, that India will have to do much the same, and I must say I cannot conceive anything more unfortunate in the daily life of this country than to have the allotment applied to railways and irrigation curtailed. The fact is that India cannot live with a 14d. rupee, and if the exchange continues to fall, she will have to repudiate her debts—or do without an army.

“ But I am not concerned with financial questions outside the Province—though I must bear witness to the general feeling of dissatisfaction which prevails throughout the country at the exemption of cotton from the proposed import duties. I do not express any opinion of my own—but people are asking whether it is right to subordinate the interests of 290 millions of people to those of the odd few who happen to live in Lancashire, and the 290 millions, as far as I can judge, do not think so.

“ I hope you will let me know if you wish for any special information regarding matters of public importance in

Southern India, and I shall be most happy to do all I can to supply it.

“ Believe me, yours very truly,
“ WENLOCK.”

To which a very similar reply was sent :

“ India Office,
“ Whitehall,
“ 30th March, 1894.

“ MY DEAR LORD WENLOCK,

“ I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th inst. I hope that you will write to me regularly and unreservedly in all matters affecting your Government. I deeply regret, as you do, any reduction in your Public Works Budget, but I hope that the transitional period through which India is passing, owing to the fall in silver, will result in a settlement which will relieve her from the disadvantage of a standard so widely differing from that of her creditors and her customers.

“ India is not being subordinated or sacrificed to the interests of Lancashire. Our opinion here is that a Protective duty would not be an advantage to the Indian consumer; any import duty would raise the price of all cotton goods to the consumer; he would have to pay, but to whom? So far as cotton was imported his payment would go to the Indian Exchequer—so far as the cotton was manufactured in India, his payment would go to the Indian capitalist. This is the gist of the controversy. Tax all cotton goods alike, and I do not think Parliament will interfere.

“ I shall be glad to hear from you as to the Railway Extension which you think necessary and as to the best mode of raising the capital for such extension.

“ There is a growing feeling in this country with regard to Indian Railways and the paramount importance of a considerable increase.

“ I am, dear Lord Wenlock,
“ Yours sincerely,
“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

These letters strike the keynote of what was one of the main questions of my father's Indian policy—the Cotton Duties, and to which the next chapter in this book is devoted.

His Indian policy was divided into what we might call home and foreign policy. Under the head of the former come the Cotton Duties, the Railway Extension Schemes, legislation affecting the Native Army, and the Currency question. The latter deals with the occupation of Chitral, the demarcation of the frontier in Waziristan, and all the policy which the frontier question in its fullest sense implies.

It will be well to divide these two in consideration, and begin with the home legislation, which my father always esteemed of higher importance than any other in the life and interests of a country.

From the moment he took office he seems to have been convinced of the desirability of extending the railway system throughout India, whereby to improve trade and the general conditions of the country. This reform was, as are all reforms, clogged by delays and difficulties, but there was no real opposition to their development, though the methods of best effecting it were freely argued and discussed.

"There is," wrote my father to the Viceroy, "a great and growing interest here in Railway Extension in India, and I am satisfied that, if, as I expect, the question is discussed in Parliament during this Session, the House of Commons will insist upon the Indian Government doing its utmost to facilitate both the construction and working of additional lines. Anything like an obstructive policy will not be tolerated, and I could not defend it. I mention this in connection with the unaccountable delay in linking up the metre gauge railways.

"Lord Cross distinctly and finally decided many months ago that this linking up was to be carried out. Nothing has hitherto been done; but I am glad to receive your telegram saying that you have taken steps which I hope will ensure immediate compliance with the Secretary of State."

It is noteworthy that though my father was ultra cautious in the adoption of a policy, yet when he had definitely made up

his mind, he brooked no delay in pushing on the action, and went straight ahead for the practical execution of the policy about which he held no doubts after once he had decided upon it. In less than two months after he became Secretary of State he wrote to Lord Elgin :

“ I have introduced in the House of Commons a Bill to enable Indian Railway Companies to pay interest on their paid-up capital during construction out of capital. I hope this may have the effect of removing an obstacle in the way of the investment of English or Indian capital in Indian railways. I understand that the Bill may be opposed, but I do not anticipate that the opposition will be of a very serious nature.”

The Viceroy explained to him in reply as follows :

“ I am very glad to know your views as to Railway Extension. I believe that a great deal can be done in this matter. The delays are immense. The system seems to me greatly to blame for this. It is bad enough in the case of works to be undertaken by the Government, but it is almost fatal to the introduction of private enterprise. I believe there are a good many lines which could be, and would be undertaken by private companies, if it was possible to arrange the bargains with any despatch. Schemes get hopelessly tied up in the Department, and in more than one case I have found out that the file had remained for months, and when I got it of course the information was out of date. I mention this to explain the position of what is known here as the linking up case—*i.e.*, the connection of the metre gauge systems *viâ* Cawnpore. There is in the Department a rooted objection to this, and an opinion that the connection ought to be by a line from Bareilly to Soron.”

Such purposeful delay in the Department in question as Lord Elgin referred to, lit a match at once in the new Secretary of State. All who have worked under my father in his different offices speak with one voice of his kindness, his courtesy and his consideration. With them he was always ready to take counsel, and to their opinions he paid the highest respect. But towards those who were working against him, instead of under him, he froze into an authority which he allowed no man to touch. There was

no compromise there. This is shown by his reply to Lord Elgin :

" I hope to receive as soon as possible the views of your Government about the linking up. The proposed Bareilly-Soron route is regarded here rather in the light of the proverbial ' red herring,' and I do not think it will be approved. When the Secretary of State has, as in the present case, come to a definite decision, it is the duty of the head of the Department concerned to carry out his policy, however much it may be opposed to his own views. I am afraid that the opinion averse to the linking up project, may, by delay, practically defeat the policy which has been deliberately adopted by the three successive Secretaries of State ; and I shall be glad if you can give the head of the Department a hint that, after the Government have decided upon a policy, they expect that he will subordinate his personal views and loyally second them in what they regard as most desirable in the interests of India."

And again :

" Your telegram of the 24th ultimo on the subject of linking up is satisfactory in so far as it shows that your Government are at last taking the matter up. I will see that there is no delay in dealing with the matter here."

In referring to a Memorandum which had been left him by Lord Tweeddale he characteristically said, " I have no means of judging of the merits of the scheme, but I object most strongly to the policy of postponement. The promoters have a right to an answer one way or the other." On June 8th, 1894, he wrote . " The Bill authorizing the payment by Indian Railway Companies of interest out of capital during construction has now passed the House of Commons." Any Departmental delay he instantly detected and dealt with. In a letter of June 15th, 1894, we find, " I have heard rumours that the Delhi-Karachi Railway business is being dealt with in your Public Works Department in a manner likely to postpone action ; and of course this cannot be allowed." He also makes a suggestion that some member of the hierarchy of the Public Works Department should be an experienced Railway Manager, as such a man would be most useful as a Public Works

Member of Council, or Director-General of Railways. Lord Elgin did all that was in his power to further the Railway Extension Schemes, and to put an end to Departmental delays. He said in a letter written on June 9th, from Calcutta :

“ I have given a considerable amount of attention to the Railway Policy since I arrived here ; and my object is to try in some way to put an end to these intolerable delays which I should think are fatal to bonâ-fide private enterprise. Men with capital to invest want to place it somewhere within a reasonable time ; but in these Indian projects the schemes are bandied about for years before anything is decided. I see no reason for this. I think you will agree that if in the next few years we could construct the really important lines on the list, we might well be satisfied with the achievement. I believe it could be done if we set to work systematically, as the large Railway Companies of England do,— by settling first what lines they want ; secondly, the plans on which they are to be made ; thirdly, the best agency for their construction, and only then negotiating for the actual works.”

On March 29th, 1895, the Secretary of State wrote to the Viceroy :

“ Our telegrams on the Railway Rebate question will have shown you that the Government here feel that they cannot leave this question any longer unsettled. I have pledged myself to Parliament to proceed rapidly with railway construction in three ways :

“ (1). By the employment to the utmost possible extent of Native Capital ;

“ (2). By offering reasonable inducements to British Capitalists to invest their money ;

“ (3). By continuing the policy of the construction of railways by the State.

“ I have a very high opinion of ——’s ability as a financier, but he does not appear to have grasped the principles of railway management. At all events he seems to ignore the cardinal principle that railway facilities create traffic ; and his idea that new lines, and especially branch lines, are constructed for the purpose

of dealing with existing traffic requirements is opposed to railway experience of every country in the world."

And on June 28th, 1895, in his last letter to Lord Elgin before the change of Government in which my father left the India Office, he wrote concerning his beloved railway scheme :

" The general question of railway extension in India is, in my view, one of the most important connected with the prosperity of the country, and I am glad to think that the last two years have seen a considerable advance."

It was not only with Lord Elgin that this question for the Railway Extension in India was opened by the Secretary of State. He wrote in much the same strain to the Governors of Madras and of Bombay, pressing the point all round. To Lord Wenlock he wrote very shortly after he was appointed to the India Office : " I am specially interested in the development of the Indian Railway system. Much remains to be done before the country is properly opened up, and, so far, capital has not been attracted to Indian railways to such an extent as the prospects of enterprise in this direction seem to warrant." The Governor of Madras showed himself very anxious for the extension of the railways in Southern India. " You ask me about our railway extensions," he wrote. " Well, the one about which I feel most deeply and which I consider the most important for the whole of Southern India is the link between Madras and Bezrada on the new East Coast Railway. This will be the lowest of the three sections of the main branch line between Madras and Calcutta—a distance of roughly one thousand miles. If this were constructed we should be placed in direct communication with our Northern districts." To which my father replied at once :

" As to Railway Extension, I am glad to have your views as to the wants of Madras Presidency. I am a firm believer in the extension of railways so far as it can be done with reasonable prospects of success. I have not yet had before me the East Coast Railway scheme, but I shall always be glad to consider carefully, and with every wish to come to a favourable decision, any schemes of the nature indicated by you in your letter." And again some months later :

"I am quite alive to the importance of extending the East Coast Railway, if funds can in any reasonable way be provided. The matter is now under consideration here and I hope a satisfactory solution of the financial side of the question may be found."

Lord Harris, the Governor of Bombay, wrote concerning the same subject: "As to Railway Extension I am but a humble Provincial Governor with no financial responsibility as regards extension, and therefore unable to effectively press my demands home. But if our wishes could be met we should see some feeder lines in Guzerat pushed on." He described at length various lines which might with advantage be extended, and said: "Those are the lines within the Presidency in which we are interested; but without the money being found by Government or private enterprise in England they are not likely to be made." And he received very much the same reply, in which the Secretary of State expressed his interest and belief in any such scheme, and his intention to further it in every possible way. Again, after Lord Sandhurst was appointed to succeed Lord Harris as Governor of Bombay, he said in a letter to the Secretary of State:

"I have been doing what I can to hurry on the new Railway, but I learn that the land is not yet surveyed, nor is the whole alignment definitely settled;" and my father said in his reply: "I am glad to hear that you are interesting yourself about railway matters. In my opinion the extension of cheap and rapid communication is a most important matter in the present state of India."

Another question which was being put before the Secretary of State's notice, and at the instigation of Queen Victoria, who ever took so keen and considerate an interest in the welfare of her Indian native subjects, was the existence of various grievances connected with the Pilgrim traffic. He at once communicated with the Governor of Bombay on the different points, and Lord Harris pointed out in reply that there was an officer entitled the "Protector of Pilgrims," whose duties were to give information to Pilgrims, to guard them against ill-treatment and deceit, to issue passports and settle disputes. He also emphasized the fact

that a large number of the Pilgrims were not British subjects and came down from Central Asia, and so the taxpayers of India would doubtless object to Government defraying the cost of superior conditions for non-British-Indian subjects, should the Government be willing to do so. And he showed among the difficulties which block most improvements, the one that the Pilgrims themselves preferred the present conditions of their travelling, and would fight against any reform, however much it might be for their good. "The space on deck allotted appears to European ideas distressingly small; but is made so to a considerable extent by the Pilgrims themselves, who will not allow their personal baggage to be stowed away in the hold, and insist on piling it up round them in the 'tween decks." "But it will be a pleasure," Lord Harris added, "to help you to information which may lead to these poor people, for whose intense devotion I have the highest admiration, being helped."

The Secretary of State replied that he had submitted Lord Harris's letter to the Queen, and had had some conversation with her on the subject. Also he proposed to address a despatch dealing with the question to the Government of India, who would doubtless communicate with the Government of Bombay. In July, 1894, he wrote to Lord Harris:

"In a conversation I recently had with Her Majesty she expressed much interest in the condition of Mohammedan Pilgrims to Mecca to which I referred you in my letter of 8th June. Your letter of the 26th June replies to my remarks, and I think there is much in what you say as to the difficulties in the way of helping them. There are, however, some points which must be dealt with by your Government, and I shall be glad if you will let me have your views in a private and separate letter which I can transmit to the Queen, who takes the deepest interest in the whole question."

Of course this inquiry stirred up a thick sediment of opposition. "As regards the Pilgrims," wrote the Governor of Bombay, "there are masses of correspondence about them. I'll be delighted to do anything I can to help these poor people, but it is just a matter of *£ s. d.* What is wanted more than anything is a proper sanitary

system at Camaran, for which the Turkish rather than the British authorities should be worked."

The Secretary of State also wrote to the Viceroy :

" During my stay at Balmoral the question of the Pilgrim traffic has been fully considered by the Queen, and I shall send you a despatch stating the decision at which, with Her Majesty's approval, I have arrived. The Queen feels very strongly about the treatment of the Pilgrims and I share her views. Harris wrote me a long letter, which the Queen has seen. His proposals are reasonable, and, with the alterations I shall suggest, will, I think, obviate the difficulties." Lord Elgin in his turn wrote :

" The papers in reference to the Pilgrim traffic are at this moment before me. Our people are a little up in arms about it." There were opposing Mohammedan and Hindu interests ; there was the ever-existing objection to a higher cost even to procure better and necessary conditions on the part of the Pilgrims themselves, and in most cases an inability to meet that cost. There was conflicting evidence as to the accommodation, and all the usual appendages of every inquiry ; but still the despatch was sent from the India Office, and in it the question of increasing the cost of the journey to the Pilgrims was specially dealt with.

Another question which my father dealt with was that of Simultaneous Examinations for the Civil Service. The Indian National Congress had agitated for it and a resolution in favour of it, on the motion of Mr. Herbert Paul, had been adopted by the House of Commons. But the Secretary of State sturdily refused, in what he believed to be the interests of India, to assent to the proposal, and his decision was against Simultaneous Examinations in spite of a good deal of favourable local opinion.

English Governors in India at that time held different opinions concerning the English education of native princes, as to whether it was more desirable to carry out that education in England or in India. My father replied in the following diplomatic terms : " I agree that it is quite possible to overdo the Anglicizing of native rulers, though a knowledge of England and English ways cannot but be advantageous."

My father was much interested in the following account of an old-fashioned Indian Chief—a difficult picture to fit into the nineteenth century :

“ Mahableshtar,

“ 13.4.94.

“ MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ The death of Mir Ali Murad Khan of Haripur removes from the scene one of, if not the last of, the patriarchal rulers of British India. We never interfered with him, as long as he did not interfere with our subjects ; he hated railways, and never lived in a house, but moved his camp from place to place as sport enticed him. When a miscreant shot him in the back some years back the old man responded by shooting his assailant between the eyes. He was indeed a dead shot. The succession has been peacefully carried out so far ; thanks to the presence of British bayonets.

“ Yours sincerely

“ HARRIS.”

The question of flogging in the Indian Army was dealt with at this time and involved a good deal of conflicting opinion. On December 26th, 1894, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State : “ It seems certain that there must be discussion on the flogging question. That discussion has now begun. I have expressed a hope that we shall not have another conflict with Parliamentary opinion.” On Jan. 18th, 1895, the Secretary of State replied : “ I hope there will be no attempt at any conflict with the House of Commons over the flogging clauses. Unless your Council passes a Bill dealing with this question, I fear that the clause exempting the Indian Army will be struck out of the Mutiny Act.”

On January 23rd, 1895, the Viceroy wrote : “ A Despatch has been agreed to on flogging in the Native Army. You will probably not be surprised to find that it argues for its retention. . . . I am bound to say that I do not expect you to be able to give way any more than Lord Cross.” On February 15th, the Secretary

of State wrote : " I hope we shall be able to avoid another conflict between Parliament and Indian opinion in regard to the flogging clauses. Your Council had better clearly understand that Parliament will not allow the continuance of flogging in the Indian Army after it has been abolished everywhere else throughout the Empire. It is idle to embark on this controversy. The Indian Army will be included in the Mutiny Act, as I have already indicated, if flogging is not abolished in your Army, and surely your military advisers do not wish this. I await your Despatch with some anxiety."

Such difficulties also arose from time to time as the one dealt with in the following correspondence. In June, 1894, the Viceroy wrote : " I am in some difficulty about a party of Missionaries, headed by a Miss Taylor, who are anxious to go into Sikkim and Thibet. In the meantime the Bengal Government have stopped them at Darjeeling. The Durbar in Sikkim wish to exclude them ; but as we practically control the State the matter is in our hands. Everybody is agreed that the prospects of the Trade Convention, lately agreed to after prolonged negotiations, will very probably be damaged by any attempt of Missionaries to force their way in. This was clearly stated in the official instructions sent from Peking to the Chinese Agent at Yatung. But this is not all. Two gentlemen, who found their way in the other day from Bhutan, were arrested by the Thibetans, who wished to kill them, and would certainly have maltreated them, had the Chinese not interfered and had them sent back to our frontier. I do not suppose we are responsible for people who insist on going into dangerous places ; but I scarcely like to allow ladies to do so. On the other hand, at present I am not sure that we have any legal right to stop them. I am inquiring whether we could enact a Frontier regulation, similar to the one we have on the North-West Frontier, which would of course apply to everyone, not to Missionaries only. I believe that for the present it might be prudent to have powers of this kind in reference to Thibet."

And a few days later he added : " There are political considerations outside the Trade Convention. Thibetans may cause us trouble, especially in Sikkim, and, if they think we are using our

Trade Convention for the purpose of annoying them in other ways, they may become mischievous. I confess to some pity for the Missionaries themselves. I do not believe they appreciate the position, and, as regards personal risk, are carried away by their religious enthusiasm. For my part, I should be quite prepared to take my share of responsibility in interfering for their protection against their will."

To which the Secretary of State replied: "As to Thibet, I would be prepared to consider any proposals that you may make. I think that when Sir Charles Elliot, who is not unfriendly to Missionaries, has found it necessary to take special precautions to exclude them from Thibet, it would be unwise to over-rule him. I understand that it is the very general opinion that the lives of the Missionaries would not be safe in Thibet."

The enactment of the Cantonments Bill entailed a prolonged controversy, as Indian and Home opinion were in conflict, but, while agreeing to some minor concessions to Indian opinion, the Secretary of State insisted on the passing of the Bill. With regard to this the Viceroy wrote in January, 1895: "I could not help saying to my colleagues, when telling them what Her Majesty's Government were prepared to do, that in this case, as in the Tariff Bill, you had taken, in my opinion, a very strong course, and had not hesitated to face serious Parliamentary difficulties."

While Henry Fowler was Secretary of State for India a Royal Commission, under Lord Brassey, was appointed thoroughly to investigate the Opium question. The cultivation of opium under Government authority, its distribution to the people of India, and its export to the people of China, appeared to a large and conscientious section of the English people as little less than a gigantic crime. The Commission included special representatives of the non-opium party. It went out to India, examined hundreds of witnesses, and finally reported in favour of the existing system. The evidence embodied in the report was overwhelming, and the recommendation of the Commission in favour of allowing the existing system to continue was signed by all the Commissioners except one. The report was widely discussed in the House of Commons, and the Secretary of State made a memorable speech

defending the Commission and its conclusions. He proved to the great majority of the House that the interdict which the prohibitionists wished to impose on India was impossible, even if desirable, and that the evidence was overwhelming that it was no more desirable than it was possible. He pointed out that opium



THE GREAT MOGUL.

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is grown in the native states, and their right to grow what they pleased could not be interfered with, except under threat, and possibly by actual levying of war. Even if this could be accomplished, a new frontier-line, five thousand miles in length, would have to be constantly patrolled to prevent the smuggling of the drug, which is so small in bulk that it can be concealed about the person in a way that would baffle the energies of the most vigilant of custom-house services. The loss of revenue would amount to about 600,000 rupees a year, and ten thousand men would have to be added at once to the Indian Army. The House was conscious of the supreme rectitude and authority with which the

Secretary of State spoke, and the result was that the agitation vanished into thin air. On June 7th, 1895, he wrote to Lord Elgin. "The Opium debate ended very satisfactorily. We had a majority of 176 against 59"

In June, 1895, a Royal Commission was appointed to report on the financial relations between the Indian and the Home Government. The appointment of this Commission was regarded by some officials in India as a reflection upon the Indian Government. On June 12, the Secretary of State wrote to the Viceroy: "With regard to the Royal Commission, I used every endeavour to restrict the terms of reference, and to make it quite clear that questions of policy were to be excluded. In the appointment of a Royal Commission we had to see that there was a fair representation of the India Office, the Treasury and the War Office, as well as of the Anglo-Indian, the forward, and the independent sections of the House of Commons. We also had to see that there was a proper proportion of the Government and the Opposition. It was not a case in which your Government could be consulted. I did my best, and the general impression is that the Commission is able, competent and representative. Any idea of the Government of India being on its trial is groundless. I was a member of the Ridley Commission who inquired into our Civil Expenditure. No one suggested that the appointment of this Commission implied any reflection on the Treasury or the Government. We (I mean the Indian Government) contend that we pay too much to the Home Government. It is surely no reflection on us that our complaint should be investigated. We considered it best that the Indian expert evidence should be provided by the witnesses. Sir Henry Waterfield will give evidence, and I think it most probable that you will be asked to send home one of your Financial Staff to give evidence. I have no doubt that many valuable suggestions will be made to the Finance Department in India for the improvement and simplification of the financial procedure (which I do not think is by any means as simple and as economical as that of the Treasury). The Commission will not hold any sittings in India."

By instances such as these it is seen how perpetual were the

demands made upon the Secretary of State's powers of administration, decision and conciliation. Questions of every kind and type were submitted to him, and awaited his ruling.

In February, 1895, Sir Charles Crosthwaite gave up the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North-Western Provinces, and the Queen, who always took the deepest interest in her Indian Empire, wrote to my father as to his successor :

“ Windsor Castle,

“ February 20, 1895.

“ Has Sir Charles Crosthwaite given up his Governorship of the North-West Provinces definitely ? He will be a great loss, and the Queen Empress would be glad to know who is to succeed as Lieutenant-Governor of the N. W. Provinces. She trusts a good, able and conciliatory man will be chosen.”

Sir A. P. McDonnell was considered by both the Secretary of State and the Viceroy to be the most suitable man for the post, and he was recommended for appointment to the Queen, who wrote again :

“ Windsor Castle,

“ March 7, 1895.

“ The Queen Empress thanks Mr. Fowler for his letter submitting the Viceroy's recommendation of Sir A. P. McDonnell as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces in the place of Sir C. Crosthwaite. She has approved it in consequence of the promise given to continue Sir C. Crosthwaite's policy.”

The life of one of the great Departments of the State is studded with such minor legislation as the above questions deal with, quite independently of its greater policy—therefore the time of its chief is occupied with a detailed understanding of many interests which the public generally never hear of, but which require the most careful thought and diplomatic decisions.

What Henry Fowler did as Secretary of State for India would be answered historically by two words. "Cotton Duties and Chitral." But in the personal life of the man, to give a real impression of his Secretaryship of State, it is worth while to show how the "trivial round, the common task" of great Government Offices, cover a far wider area of ruling than outsiders can imagine. The government of a country is both wider and more detailed in its operations than any one naturally would suppose. The demands upon the heads of it are immeasurably greater than anyone outside the offices can have any idea of, and a successful Minister of State means infinitely more than the author of a popular policy or the adjudicator in a national crisis.

In January, 1895, Lord Harris' term of the Governorship of Bombay expired and the Secretary of State appointed Lord Sandhurst as his successor. In my father's last letter to Lord Harris on January 11th, he said: "I am sorry to think that this may be the last letter which will reach you from me before you leave the post which you have so ably filled for the last five years. It is, however, pleasant to me to believe that during the time of our official connection our relations have been uniformly cordial. I must, though in this informal way, tender to you my thanks for the manner in which you have discharged the responsible and difficult duties of the post which you have filled to the satisfaction of the Queen Empress and of the Governments which have been in office during the period of your Governorship."

To which Lord Harris replied :

"Bombay,

"January 30th, 1895.

"MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

"I am extremely grateful to you for the highly complimentary terms in which you refer to my conduct of the Governorship of Bombay; and beg you will accept my thanks. To know that I have satisfied Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty the Queen Empress is an ample reward for what I have done.

" I will take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude also for the support this Government has received from the Secretary of State, and especially yourself, in matters which have come up to the Secretary of State for decision. Confidence in England being ready to back up those who are working for her in distant countries means very much to them ; and I am very grateful for the support this Government has received.

" I remain, dear Mr. Fowler,

" Yours very truly,

" HARRIS."

The Secretary of State wrote to the Viceroy on Lord Sandhurst's appointment : " Sandhurst's is a popular and good appointment, and I think he will prove to be a safe and successful administrator." The prophecy was amply fulfilled, and my father often, in after years, expressed his satisfaction that he had been the author of an appointment which was proved to be as successful at its close as it was popular at its beginning.

So much stress has been laid upon my father's desire for compromise amid conflicting opinions, and his calm moderation in dealing with political opponents, that there is perhaps a tendency to ignore that power of command, which he possessed, and that stern authority which he wielded as a ruler when occasion required its supremacy. In many of the positions in life which he occupied he was an administrator, an arbiter, a peacemaker, a counsellor ; but at the India Office he was a ruler, and there was no compromising with his commands. This is illustrated by some letters which he wrote to Lord Elgin on the subject of certain adverse opinions and actions on the part of the Members of the Viceroy's Council with regard to the Government's decision at home.

" A member of a Council resembles in some respects a Cabinet Minister, and in some respects those members of the Government who are not members of the Cabinet. There is, however, one essential difference which must not be overlooked. A member of the Government here, whether in or out of the Cabinet, is, if in the House of Commons, a Member of Parliament elected by,

and responsible to, his constituents. Your Executive Council are appointed by the Government and have no responsibility to any outside authority. An English M.P. whose duty to his constituents compels him to oppose any proposal of the Government of which he is a member, is bound to resign his office in such a case, and this has been frequently done. A Government, whether in Downing Street or Calcutta, must act as a homogeneous body, not as representing certain political opinions, but as representing an executive authority which cannot act, whether in administration or legislation, efficiently, unless they act unitedly. And this would be the case if India was—to use the Colonial word—‘ self-governing ’ ; but the constitution is not the constitution of Australia or Canada.

“ The existing law subjects the Government of India to the control of the Imperial Government, and the Secretary of State, who exercises that control, is responsible to Parliament. He, like every other Minister of the Crown, cannot continue to hold office if the House of Commons disapproves of his official conduct. India is, by the Act of Parliament, governed by and in the name of ‘ the Queen, and she governs by the advice of a responsible Minister.’ ”

And then alluding to some special circumstances he adds :

“ The proposals of the Indian Government are made under the direction of two successive Governments of the Queen. It is idle for any officer under the Crown to talk of defying this accumulation of authority.

“ So long as any matter of administration or policy is undecided every member of the Government of India is at liberty to express his own opinion ; but when a certain line of policy has been adopted under the directions of the Cabinet, it is the clear duty of every member of the Government of India to consider, not what that policy ought to be, but how effect may best be given to the policy that has been decided upon ; and, if any member of that Government is unable to do this, there is only one alternative open to him.”

And again a month later he wrote :

“ The Cabinet have very carefully considered the whole question

of the Members of the Executive Council, and they are of opinion that the English precedent applies, and, therefore, that Members of the Executive Council, must, as Members of the Government here do, vote together in support of Government Measures. If they are unable to do this, then the English precedent also applies, and the objecting Member resigns, before he either abstains from voting for, or votes against, the measure. No English statesman, no subordinate member of any English Government, would hesitate as to taking this course, and therefore, the painful alternative of dismissal never arises. You will remember the celebrated case of Mr. Huskisson, who, after having voted in favour of a proposal which the Government opposed, sent in his resignation to the Duke of Wellington the same night. He afterwards wished to withdraw it on the ground that it was a mistake, but the Duke replied in the well-known sentence—‘There was no mistake; there could be no mistake; and there should be no mistake.’ I should be very sorry to think that you have in your Council any man who would dispute the supreme authority of the Cabinet on a constitutional question, and by withholding his resignation necessitate his dismissal. However, my duty is clear; and, with the cordial support of my colleagues, I shall immediately advise the Queen to dismiss any Member of the Council who so far forgets what is due to his own position and to the position of the Viceroy as to attempt to continue a Member of a Government whose policy he is unable to support.”

Thus Henry Fowler could lay down the law, and with unswerving severity he could uphold it. Without this attribute he could never have proved himself the successful Secretary of State for India, which all opinions, both in India and at Home, were unanimous in declaring him to be; and the fact that his life was fuller of arbitration than of authority is perhaps partly owing to the accident, or, as he would correct me to say, the Providence, which placed him for far more years among the counsellors of the country than among its commanders.

CHAPTER XVII

1895

COTTON DUTIES

' To be right in great memorable moments is, perhaps, the thing we need most desire for ourselves.'—GEORGE ELIOT.

"Mind to create, as well as to attain,
To sway his peers by golden eloquence
As wind doth shift a vane."

JEAN INGELow

"I have done the State some service, and they know it."—SHAKESPEARE.

ON assuming office as Secretary of State for India in March, 1894, Henry Fowler took over from his predecessor, Lord Kimberley, a controversy kindled by the action of the Indian Government in re-imposing a five per cent. tariff on imported goods. The controversy continued through the latter's tenure of office, and its final settlement was left to his successor.

In a sense the controversy was a revival of the long and embittered contest in the eighties between the Cotton Manufacturers of Lancashire and the then nascent cotton-mill industry of Bombay. At that time a five per cent. import tariff was in force in India. As it extended to cotton piece goods and cotton yarns, it excited the hostility of English cotton manufacturers. In 1877, and again in 1879, resolutions condemning the duties as protective in their character, contrary to sound commercial policy, and unjust alike to the Indian consumer and the English producer, and calling for their repeal, were passed by the House of Commons. In 1882 the prosperous state of the Indian finances enabled the Indian Government to dispense with the cotton and other import duties, and thereby to end the strife with Lancashire. Owing to the continued fall in the exchange value of the rupee and to rising

expenditure the Indian Government at the close of 1893 were faced with a large deficit. Additional taxation became necessary. They decided to re-impose the five per cent. duties on imported goods, including cotton manufactures. Lord Kimberley refused his consent to the inclusion of the latter, and accordingly the Indian Tariff Act of March, 1894, while taxing other imported commodities, exempted cotton piece goods and yarns. There was strong opposition in the Indian Legislative Council and in the Indian Press to the exemption of cotton goods, which was interpreted as a political surrender to Manchester interests. It was not allayed by the Viceroy's announcement, made with Lord Kimberley's assent, that, if after an interval sufficient to judge of the financial position as affected by the Tariff Act, the course of exchange and other circumstances, there was no improvement, Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to reconsider the question of extending the import duties to cotton goods.

This was the position with which the new Secretary of State had to deal upon entering office. On the one hand there was the certainty of a large deficit in the Indian revenue in the coming financial year, and a bitter feeling in India that the cause was due to the restricting action of Her Majesty's Government; on the other hand the cotton interest in Lancashire and in Parliament was anxious and on the alert.

On 13th March, 1894, Sir George Chesney, member for Oxford, moved an amendment to the Address, expressing regret at "the determination of Her Majesty's advisers, contrary to the wishes of the people of India, to restrain the Government of India from taking the measures proposed by them for meeting the deficit in their revenues." In replying to this my father explained that the decision was not final, and undertook to give the whole question the fullest consideration. A few days later (19th March, 1894), in reply to a question, he intimated that if the Indian Government were to propose a countervailing duty on cotton goods manufactured in India, the chief objection to the imposition of an import duty would in his opinion be removed. Later on in the year (16th August, 1894), in making the annual Indian Budget Statement, he re-affirmed this view. He said :

"If the manufacturers of India are prepared to submit to a countervailing duty which will destroy the element of protection, I do not see why the import duty should not be imposed."

On the following day the Secretary of State wrote his account of this proceeding to the Viceroy in the following letter :

' India Office,

" 17th August, 1894.

" DEAR LORD ELGIN,

" We have had this week practically a three days' debate in the House of Commons upon Indian matters.

" There is a very strong feeling with reference to the cotton duties ; but I am satisfied that any attempt to impose those duties, without a countervailing excise duty, would raise very serious difficulties here ; in fact we should be embarked upon the old controversy of free trade and protection. There is no doubt that the effective competition between Lancashire and India, as at present, is limited. If an import duty were imposed the competition would become more acute, and both spinning and weaving yarn and piece goods, which are now imported from Lancashire, would be spun and woven in India under the stimulus of what would be a protective duty. We must, therefore, in considering this matter, lay it down as vital that the principle of a countervailing duty must be recognized. Assuming that a uniform duty is levied upon all imported cotton goods—and I am very doubtful myself of the practicability of any discriminating duties—we should also have to deal so far as the excise duty was concerned with goods that are manufactured in India. It would seem that such a duty levied upon the higher counts of yarn, and on the better class of piece goods, would meet the exigencies of the case, and really lay the tax where we wish it to be laid. I think that the mode of collection of the excise duty should be as simple as possible.

" I am, my dear Lord Elgin,

" Yours sincerely,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

Again in November, 1894, he wrote :

" I am of opinion that the Cabinet will not agree to the imposition of the Import Duty without a countervailing Excise Duty of a bonâ-fide character."

Referring to a suggested Excise Duty on all Indian yarns of counts over twenty-fours as grappling with the protective difficulty he continued, " I doubt, however, whether this dividing line is not fixed somewhat too high, and I am at present rather inclined to think that it would be safer to draw it at twenties. My second difficulty has reference to the taxation of imported yarns. I am doubtful whether it is clear that a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty on yarns woven in India will be equivalent to a 5 per cent. duty on pure goods woven here from the same count of yarns."

In the next letter : " The Cabinet has the Cotton Duties question under their consideration. At present all that I can say is that there must not be a shadow of doubt as to the completeness of the Excise Duty to cover all cases in which competition exists or is likely to exist. I think the duty on both yarns and piece goods should be 5 per cent.—that the Excise Duty should be 5 per cent.—and that the Excise Duty should cover all yarns over twenties."

A private telegram from the Viceroy replied :

" We would raise no objection to taking 5 per cent. on yarns, both imported and manufactured, though we calculate it gives protection to Manchester against India, inasmuch as the latter has to pay duty on stores consumed. We would still strongly deprecate the dividing line at twenty, as our information is that there is no Manchester competition nearly so low as that, and Manchester's principal declared object is to prevent India having an advantage which would enable it to unfairly extend its competition in manufacturing higher counts. The two fields of manufacture and consumption as divided at twenty-four are under very diverse conditions, owing to physical quality of Indian cotton and of American cotton. We think that it should be remembered that the policy has to be defended to Indian interests as well as to English, and as there appears to be no good reason to go so low as twenty we are afraid it would increase the difficulty both in legislation and in administration."

The Secretary of State telegraphed on 29th November, 1894, to the Viceroy :

“ I am glad you accept 5 per cent. for yarn. With regard to counts I fully appreciate your difficulty, but I bear in mind House of Commons’ resolutions and distinct pledges of Her Majesty’s Government that no duty having protective effect shall be imposed. It is absolutely necessary therefore to keep on the safe side. My information is that piece goods are now exported to India containing yarns below 24 mixed with others. I think 20’s safest dividing line. You might take power to raise line hereafter to 24 if satisfied that there is no competition between these limits.”

And in a letter written the same day, he reiterates what he had telegraphed. “ I should like to emphasize that it is absolutely essential that the Excise Duty should be so fixed as to eliminate any possibility of protection. The Government are absolutely pledged that they will not, without the consent of Parliament, assent to any protective duty. I have had more than one conversation with personal friends of my own, who are well acquainted with the cotton trade ; and I am informed that piece-goods are imported into India containing counts below twenty-fours. I do not believe that the amount is large ; but we must proceed very cautiously in view of the strong opposition which the import duty is certain to arouse ; and it will be easier to raise the dividing line hereafter, should experience prove that it is placed too low, than to lower it in the contrary case.”

On December 13th he wrote :

“ I anticipate great opposition here, and I am convinced that any tampering with the proposed Excise Duty will be fatal.” And again : “ I have had several conversations with men well acquainted with the Cotton trade which have left an impression on my mind that goods are imported of counts lower than twenty-fours. If this be the case, the Bombay manufacturer would to some extent be protected by a line fixed at twenty-fours. It is, I think, therefore essential that we should tentatively adopt the lower line

in the first instance ; and if carefully prepared statistics show, after the lapse of a reasonable time, that a line fixed at twenties is too low, it will be easy to raise it to twenty-fours. The outcry here against the Import Duty is at least as loud as that of the Bombay Mill-owners is likely to be against the Excise Duties."

In the last days of December, 1894, a Bill for imposing a duty on imported yarns or cotton piece goods and a countervailing excise duty was passed after a heated debate by the Viceroy's Legislative Council. Referring to these proceedings the Secretary of State, in January, 1895, wrote to the Viceroy and fully explained his position :

" India Office,

" January 2nd, 1895.

" MY DEAR LORD ELGIN,

" I have watched with the keenest interest the proceedings with respect to the Cotton Duties ; and as I am abused with equal virulence by the Lancashire and Tory Press, and by the Indian (Native and Anglo-Indian), I cannot help thinking that my sincere desire to do equal justice, and to steer an even keel, has to some extent been successful. I have asked my Secretary to send you an extract from a Lancashire paper which assumes to represent the Textile industries ; and from the violent language of that article you will understand my amazement at the attacks upon me on your side for sacrificing India to Lancashire !! If there is no competition, as the Indian manufacturers assert, between India and Lancashire, the Excise Duty will not be levied, and India will have no ground of complaint, if there is, then the Indian consumer would have to pay an extra £5 per cent. to the Bombay mill-owners, if there was no Excise, instead of to the Indian Exchequer. £100 goods made in Lancashire cost the consumer £105, and of this, £5 goes into the Exchequer. £100 goods made in Bombay cost the consumer £105, and of this £5 (if there is an Excise) goes into the Exchequer, and (if there is no Excise) goes into the pocket of the Bombay or Bengal mill-owners. That in a

nutshell is my argument. I assume that the Members of the Legislative Council who voted against the Excise Bill were not shareholders of, or interested in, any Indian Cotton Mills. I shall have a fight when Parliament meets, and my position will not be strengthened by the adverse criticism of India on the Excise Bill. Your advisers should always bear in mind that Lancashire wants no cotton duties at all, and that the Anti-Indian party here will support anything and oppose anything, if by so doing they can embarrass the Government of India. The aim here will be to repeal the Customs Duties, and under these circumstances, I am entitled to some support from those who are ardent advocates of the duties.

“ I am, my dear Lord Elgin,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

The Viceroy replied :

“ I sympathize entirely in your astonishment at the attitude taken up here on the Cotton Duties. It has always seemed to me quite unreasonable and unreasoning. But the more I see of it the more shallow does what stands for public opinion here appear to me to be. I do not think it is so directly governed by pecuniary interests, as, *e.g.*, the article you sent me, it is more the opinion of the man in the street, or at best the man in the Club. There is a great deal of talk of the interests of India; but there is no real attempt to look at Indian interests collectively, and certainly none, so far as the newspapers are concerned, to give a fair and steady support to the British Government as now established.”

The Act thus passed by the Indian Government imposed a customs import duty of five per cent. on all imported cotton manufactures (including piece goods, yarns and thread), and an excise duty of five per cent. on yarns of the finer kinds spun in Indian mills. The Secretary of State had agreed that as there was practically no import of the coarser yarns or of goods made of them, no protection would be given to the Indian; it was

considered sufficient to limit manufacturers if the countervailing excise were confined to yarn of the finer kinds in which there was competition between the foreign and the Indian manufacturer. As the correspondence has shown, there was a difference of opinion as to where the dividing line should be drawn. The Act fixed it at yarn making twenty hanks or bundles to the pound, but gave the General Government in Council power to raise the limit to "twenty-fours." As both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State had foreseen, the policy to which they had committed themselves was hotly challenged alike in India and in this country. When Parliament reassembled in February, 1895, the Indian Secretary had to defend himself against a determined attack made upon him by members interested in Lancashire. Lancashire trade was experiencing a period of extreme depression. Many mills were closed, there was much unemployment, and owners were making very little profit. In India the mill industry was in a thriving condition. Yarn in increasing quantities was going from India to Japan and China, and Indian mills were spinning finer counts and competing successfully with Manchester. The Indian Cotton Duties were regarded in Lancashire as the last blow given to an industry on the verge of ruin. As there was strong feeling in India about the constraint placed upon the Indian Government by the Home Government in the matter of imposing a countervailing excise, so there was equally strong feeling in Lancashire that the countervailing excise was not effective and gave India an advantage. My father was regarded as having weakly surrendered to Indian mill-owners and Anglo-Indian officials. On the 21st February Sir Henry James (afterwards Lord James of Hereford), then Member for Bury, moved the adjournment of the House "for the purpose of discussing the recent imposition of the duties on the importation of cotton manufactures into India."

Sir Henry James spoke as the champion of the cotton trade of Lancashire, which he argued was being sacrificed by the Secretary of State to the interests of India.

In a powerful though partisan speech, the speech essentially of a skilled advocate briefed for the occasion, he contended that

the cotton duties were the result of an unworthy agitation in India against Manchester, to which the Secretary of State had tamely yielded. "He has yielded to the Indian representations; the agitation against Manchester has succeeded. He has listened to every one of the statements that could be brought before him on the part of those who agitated against Manchester."

The accusation was that the duty was the result of a conspiracy led by officials, and that my father had acted only for India, oblivious and heedless of Lancashire's views and interests.

Sir Henry James also contended that the countervailing excise duty failed to place the British manufacturer on an absolute level of equality with the competing Indian manufacturers. The import duties were levied on imported cotton goods of all kinds and all qualities, and assessed on the full market value of the goods. The countervailing duty was levied on the value of the yarn and not on that of the finished article, and furthermore the duty was confined to yarns of finer qualities. He asserted that over a great portion of his production the Indian mill-owner was protected to the full amount of import duty and that over the remaining portion he was partly protected.

The duty, he said, was protective and was designed to give the Indian a pull on the Lancashire manufacturer. And he declared that the feeling in Lancashire was that the Secretary of State "always bore in mind that he was the Indian Minister, and never thought he was a British Minister, also, and a representative of British Interests." He asked who were the persons that Henry Fowler had taken counsel with on behalf of Lancashire, and to whom he had applied for information as to whether the course he was about to pursue would injure the Lancashire trade? Had he, indeed, considered those interests at all? No Indian Minister could possess the practical knowledge of the question that was required. It was strongly resented in Lancashire that he had not consulted practical merchants or manufacturers—that their interests had been neglected, and that the agitation against Manchester had proceeded, without those interests ever having been heard on their own behalf. Lancashire

believed that he had sought guidance from those who represented Indian interests without considering the interests of this country. In short, the three main objections which he set forth were, that the Government of which the Secretary of State was the representative had violated the principles of Free Trade; that they had imposed a heavy burden upon Lancashire, and that the Excise Duty was inadequate for the purpose of preventing protection.

His long and able speech put the matter very skilfully and very strongly, and he finished up with an impassioned appeal from Lancashire. "There cannot be an end to this question as it remains at present. There must be many loyal supporters of the Government who know how deep and true is the feeling in Lancashire on this question; and they can tell the Secretary of State for India that the demands they make upon him this evening are not the demands of capital asking for retention of inflated profits, or an attempt to secure great gains. On the contrary, they will tell him that this is a universal demand from the humblest men in Lancashire, engaged in the trade whose prosperity is thus threatened, fearful of a time, perhaps not far remote, when the busy streets of Lancashire towns may be deserted—when mills may be closed and looms silent, and when they will search in vain for means to earn their daily bread."

When the Secretary of State rose to reply, it was clear on both sides of the House the feeling was strong that on free trade principles Manchester had a substantial grievance. The atmosphere of the House was excited. There were twenty-four Liberal seats in Lancashire and a revolt of ten of them would have turned the Ministry out. It was a chance, and almost more than a chance, of defeating the Government; and Ministers were alive to their danger. And then it was that my father achieved the most brilliant success of his political career. He saw the risk, he faced it, he took it, and he made a great appeal to the Members of the House on a higher plane than that of party tactics. He fought the question on its merits; he held the House by the force of his reasoning; and he drove his arguments home with a power of eloquence, and with a power of conviction behind it, which was

the bulwark of its strength. First he repudiated with scorn the insinuations that his policy had been the result of agitators in India to whose blandishments he had succumbed.

"I cannot allow," said the Secretary of State, "another moment to elapse without repudiating in the strongest terms that there has been any agitation, any conspiracy, on behalf of any class in India in order to deal with this financial difficulty. You might as well charge the Chancellor of the Exchequer with entering into some combination with interested classes when he submits his financial proposals. The distinguished man who is at present Finance Minister in India is a man of the highest standing and of the most unblemished reputation, a man who has served the Crown for a long period of years, and who has received a signal mark of favour from the Crown for his great public services. My Right Hon. friend described him as an agitator in combination with a certain class of officials who want to raise their own salaries, and stated that he has submitted proposals, not to us in England, but to the Legislative Council of India; while the Viceroy whom my Right Hon. friend has chiefly attacked is Lord Lansdowne, who ruled India with such success for a period of five years. Are we to regard men of that character and class—men who have by their deeds shown that they take the deepest interest in the welfare of India—described as entering into a combination with Anglo-Indian officials, agitating against Manchester, and bringing to bear certain influences on the Secretary of State in order to induce him to join that conspiracy?"

"And there was one expression which my Right Hon. friend used in reference to myself. He did not mean it as a compliment, but I accept it as the greatest compliment. He told the House that I am only an Indian Minister. Yes, that is the post I fill. It is to India that I am responsible as well as to this House, and when my Right Hon. friend charges me with sacrificing the interests of England to the interests of India, he will need very satisfactory proof. He has not given that proof in the course of his speech, but I will show that the censures upon me in India are quite as severe as the censures upon me in Lancashire.

"One of the leading organs of public opinion in Lancashire

stated that 'the conspiracy of the Indian Service, the Indian Cotton Trade, and Mr. Fowler had succeeded.' About the same date there comes from India a statement 'that the sacrifice of Indian interests is the principle underlying this measure, and it is a principle to which a Radical Secretary of State has given his imprimatur.' Further, I observe that it has been stated—not perhaps in a very influential quarter in India—that I should be called the Secretary of State for Lancashire, not the Secretary of State for India. That emboldens me to go on with my argument; for having shown the House that I am attacked from two different points of the compass it is impossible for both to be true; I cannot have sacrificed Lancashire to India, and I cannot at the same time have sacrificed India to Lancashire. I have endeavoured in dealing, not with my own financial proposals, but with the financial proposals of the Government of India to steer an even keel and to do what I thought was fair justice to the interests of Lancashire and the interests of India."

And he also scornfully asked in reply to one of Sir Henry James' statements: "Did he think it was fair game to suggest that I, an ignorant man, knowing nothing of the Cotton Trade, would dare to proceed to deal with this difficult and delicate question in an autocratic spirit without consulting anybody? That is not the way in which I discharge the duty of my post. I have means of communicating with quite as competent advisers in Lancashire as my right hon. friend has. I have information—it may be sound or unsound; but at all events I have been guided by that information."

He then proceeded to take up each one of Sir Henry James' arguments and to thrash them out while the House listened not only to the play of oratory but to the power of reason behind it. The House was impressed: the House was influenced: the House was convinced.

He pointed out that the duty was not protective, because the countervailing Excise duty was levied on the same goods made in India and because it was levied to raise revenue, not to protect Indian manufacturers. He assured the House that his policy was the policy supported by Lord Lansdowne, Lord Roberts and all

the principal Indian officials. Were they all conspirators against Lancashire? Although Parliament, when fully convinced that an Indian feeling was unrighteous or silly, had a right as trustee for India to disregard it, it had no right to do so when its only motive was to protect some English traders from competition. His policy had been supported in England by Lord Cross, formerly Secretary for India, and for many years one of the Lancashire members, while Cobden himself had laid down the principle that such a duty was not a violation of Free Trade. The burden of the duty would fall on India and not on Lancashire, it would not lessen consumption because it was only levied on the more expensive cottons. For fully an hour he narrated the history of the duties and in correcting the cross-statements of Sir Henry James he made out a very reasonable defence of the countervailing Excise. He also made it abundantly clear that in resorting to the Import duties on cotton goods the Indian Government had no practical alternative course open. But he disarmed opposition by undertaking to amend the countervailing Excise arrangement in any respect in which it should be proved that an injustice had been done to Lancashire, and by promising an inquiry.

"I say frankly and openly to the Lancashire manufacturers, 'If you will prove that there is any injustice done to you, I will do my best to remedy that injustice.' This is purely a question for inquiry, and for inquiry alone. So that if the Lancashire members can show that the Import duties and the countervailing Excise duty still leaves an opening for protection the opening should be closed." And he won the sympathy of the House in his spirited defence of his own position as Indian Secretary. "Our case," he concluded, "in one word is this—the state of the finances of India necessitated additional taxation; the opinion of the Indian Government and people was unanimous in favour of Customs duties on imports; the Home Government could not permanently compel the people of India to exempt their largest imports from these duties, we were compelled both in the interests of India and of our own manufacturing population to require that these Import duties should not be protective whenever goods were imported from abroad and were in competition with similar goods

manufactured in India ; and we required that an equivalent in Excise duties should be imposed on competing goods manufactured in India. We say in explanation of this that there is not, and has not been for many years, any effective competition between India and foreign countries in respect of the coarser cotton goods, which, we allege, are consumed in India by the very poorest class of the population ; that to tax these goods would be a grievous and an oppressive direct tax on the poorest part of the nation, for which there is no justification. We say that the goods of a finer quality are not produced to any extent in India but that Lancashire has a monopoly of them, and, I believe, will continue to have it. We further say that, if it should appear on clear evidence that the Government have drawn the line too high, or that it will not remove any and every protective character, Her Majesty's Government will, in concert with that of India, consider the matter with a view to carry out loyally their declared intention to avoid protective injustice. That is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and that is the policy which I have endeavoured, feebly and imperfectly, perhaps, to pursue during the time I have been in office. I believe I have tried to do my duty to India as India's Secretary ; and that I have not neglected the interests of the people of Lancashire. I and my colleagues are, of course, responsible to this House, which is the ultimate tribunal on all these questions. We know the consequences that will follow if this House should censure the administrative acts of the Government. We shall not shrink from accepting that responsibility if that censure is inflicted. But I would also say respectfully and firmly that if the Government is responsible to this House, the House is responsible to the country.

“ My right hon. friend has said that India has no representative in this House. I deny the accuracy of that allegation. The representatives of India in this House are not one or two individuals, not even the section of members who are thought to be experts on the one hand, or those men who have a profound, a deep, and a special interest in Indian affairs on the other. Every Member of this House, whether elected by an English, or by a Scotch, or by an Irish constituency, is a Member for India. All

the interests of India—personal, political, commercial, financial, and social—are committed to the individual and collective responsibility of the House of Commons. I ask the House to discharge that gigantic trust, uninfluenced by any selfish or party feeling, but with wisdom and justice and generosity.”

Only a few speeches of the countless number delivered in Parliament throughout a century stand out as historic, but this speech of Henry Fowler’s was one of them. Only very few of the perorations which have crowned such speeches have become classic quotations in the House of Commons. “Every Member of this House is a Member for India,” is one of them. The effect on the House of Commons of that speech and of that peroration was an historic event. Opinions were swayed, convictions were driven home, and most wonderful of all, votes were converted. The ministerial crisis passed, and in the division Sir Henry James’s motion was rejected by 304 votes to 109—a majority for the Government of 195. “The game is up,” exclaimed a Lancashire mill-owner who was listening from the gallery; “that speech saved the Government!”

A torrent of congratulations poured upon Henry Fowler. He stood on his height, and because he stood so high, he bent his head. “The best part of my Indian Cotton Duty speech was never delivered,” he said with a smile; “but I saw when the tide had turned and then I sat down. The art of speaking,” he continued, “is knowing when to sit down.”

Among sheaves of letters he received the following :

“ Windsor Castle,

“ February 23rd, 1895.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ The Queen has read with much satisfaction your speech of last Thursday evening and commands me to express Her congratulations on your able and successful defence of the interests of the Indian Empire.

“ Yours very truly,

“ ARTHUR BIGGE.”

From the Prime Minister :

" 38, Berkeley Square,
" March 8th, 1895.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I am anxious with my first pen to congratulate you on your great Parliamentary triumph achieved the day I was taken ill. The Government in the House of Commons have completely routed all the various Oppositions in debate, but Asquith and you divide the crown of parsley or laurel. I wish you joy most heartily. I must add one line to this note to hope that you are better. I trust to manage a short Cabinet on Tuesday. But to all appearance it must meet in a hospital.

" Very sincerely,
" ROSEBERY."

" 11, Downing Street,
" Whitehall, S.W.
" February 22nd, 1895.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I must write a line to you to express my very hearty delight at your glorious success last night. Your speech will live as a model of Parliamentary force and judgment. It has had a great effect in the House and will create a still greater impression in the country. Your courage and firmness in fighting the battle of India against sectional interests and fads has been of lasting benefit and will be recognized as placing you in the very first rank of Indian Ministers and give you an authority which no Secretary of State has had in my political memory.

" You are in your own person an example of the incomparable advantage of the head of a great Department commanding the situation in the House of Commons. Where should we have been if the case had been left in the hands of an Under-Secretary.

"The *Times* leader this morning will not be pleasant reading for H. James, Balfour, G. Hamilton, Salisbury and Co.

"There has been nothing like it since the days of Sennacherib.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT.

"I have always received such kind and constant support from you that I could not resist writing this note."

But, of course, the majority of his political friends tendered their congratulations in person. The Press praised the speech with one voice, forgetting even its party prejudices and joining in the chorus of approval. The *Spectator* said: "Mr. Fowler's speech proved the fact that he has never yet received the political appreciation he deserves. Nobody would have fancied that such an office as an Indian Secretaryship would have brought out his qualities, but so it is. He is governing a new planet and doing it well; we only wish he could take the Viceroyalty for two years and bring the permanent trouble of India, her financial system, into order once for all. That work will never be done, and never can be done, except by a Viceroy strong enough to overrule all the stereotyped opinions of Indian financiers, who have every merit except originality. It is not either the logic or the knowledge visible in his speech which excites our admiration, but the nerve and independence which he displayed. He had made up his mind; he had resolved on a policy; and, with the fate of the Ministry quivering in the balance, he faced the House of Commons, as he had done at least twice before, with unflinching determination. The parties might vote as they pleased, but he was Minister for India, and proud of the position; and that was the only policy he should pursue. With a little more of his manliness in all departments of the State we should find the Empire safe, the groups paralyzed, and the great Council holding its true position as the fly-wheel in the machine."

The following extract from an article by Mr. Herbert Paul gives a good impression of the speech and its result. "An old Parliamentary hand, who has sat for a quarter of a century in the House

of Commons, told me that he had never in all his experience seen such a collapse as the failure of Sir Henry James' attack on the Government for imposing the Cotton Duties. The belief that Ministers would be defeated was general and was shared by both sides. A summons of unusual urgency was issued to the Conservative Party who attended in unusual numbers; that they came to give votes, and not solely to hear speeches no rational being can doubt. If the Opposition had held together, and the Liberals from Lancashire had joined them, a simple sum in arithmetic will easily prove that the Government must have been beaten. The Opposition did not hold together, and with three or four exceptions, the Lancashire Liberals voted against the motion of Sir Henry James—the result was a majority for the Government of 195. If any one had predicted such an event the previous day, he would have been set down as little better than a lunatic and he might have obtained, among sporting politicians, almost any odds against it. What was it that effected this extraordinary change? I say without hesitation that it was the speech made by the Secretary of State for India. Although I have the highest personal admiration for Mr. Fowler, my political prejudices are not likely to be in his favour. As is well known, he absolutely refused to carry out the Resolution of the House of Commons, which I had the honour to move, in favour of examining the natives of India at home. But I am bound to say that, setting Mr. Gladstone aside, I never heard an abler or a more convincing speech in my life than Mr. Fowler made on that occasion. It ought to do great good in India. For it was delivered on behalf of the Indian people; it saved them from a cruel wrong, and it vindicated before the world the justice of British rule. Mr. Fowler's final appeal to the House of Commons as the repository of a sacred trust, and as morally representing the politically unrepresented natives of India, was worthy of Burke. When he sat down the battle was over. . . .

“It is often said that speeches in the House of Commons never change votes. That is not true. I have known many instances to the contrary. But it is very rare indeed, so rare as to be almost unknown, for a speech to change votes in a formal struggle between

opposing parties to determine the fate of the Government of the day. That feat Mr. Fowler achieved, and for achieving it, in the actual circumstances of the case, he deserves the gratitude of everyone who cares for the solvency of India."

On May 27th, 1895, the Secretary of State received a deputation of Lancashire and Scotch mill-owners, who laid before him a good many points on which they alleged that the duties imposed in India was unfair competition. He asked them to give him a full statement of their grievances and undertook to remove any that were proved. Before the Memorial was ready a change of Government took place. It fell to Lord George Hamilton, who succeeded my father at the India Office, to receive and deal with the Memorial.

In the end a new solution of the dispute was arrived at. The Import duty was reduced to three and a half per cent. and restricted to cotton piece goods (yarns being exempted), and a corresponding Excise duty was levied on all cotton piece goods manufactured in Indian mills and consumed in India. This has proved a satisfactory settlement inasmuch as after a lapse of sixteen years it still endures. When the settlement thus effected by Lord George Hamilton came under debate in Parliament the late Indian Secretary's attitude was by no means unfriendly to it. He allowed that, had he remained in office, he should have modified his scheme, which he knew was not a perfect scheme, and though he also saw some defects in the new one he hesitated to condemn it, and after some discussion, following his own precepts that Indian legislation is above and beyond party considerations, he supported the new Tory Secretary of State, and practically accepted his proposals.

CHAPTER XVIII

1895

CHITRAL

"Virtue he had, deserving to command"—SHAKESPEARE.

"A jewel in a ten-times-barred-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast."

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the whole time that Henry Fowler was at the India Office the question of the North-West Frontier of India was under consideration, with its grave and important issues, both as regards the conflicts involved by the retention of Chitral and the opposing policy of its evacuation. Chitral is a district lying on the North-West Frontier between Afghanistan and Kashmir, south of the Hindu Kush and north of the Punjab. Attention was first called to the State of Chitral, or as it was then two States, Chitral Proper and Yasin, as part of our strategical frontier in consequence of the Russian absorption of Kokand, and when in 1876 an envoy from Chitral formally tendered his allegiance to the Maharaja of Kashmir, the Maharaja was interviewed on behalf of the British Government. It was to be desired in the interests of our Indian Empire that Chitral and Yasin should be under the control of Kashmir, and the British Government offered to give the Maharaja of Kashmir countenance, and, if necessary, material assistance. A British Agent was established at Gilgit, and a treaty between Kashmir and Chitral was concluded in 1878. Two years later a rising of the tribes in Yasin endangered the Agent at Gilgit, but the ruler of Chitral proved his loyalty to Kashmir by invading Yasin, which he annexed, and the two districts became united under

the Chitral Chief. Gilgit, however, remained so dangerous a post for the British Agent for many reasons that he was withdrawn, and British rule lost touch for several years with Chitral. It was not till 1889 that the great importance of the strategical position of Chitral, through which run the easiest passes over the Hindu Kush, was brought again before the British Government ; as the passes, which gave easy access to it from the north, have their southern exit through Chitral in a road which threatens the flank of any force operating on the Peshawar-Kabul line. The Russian Empire then touched the frontier of Afghanistan and had greatly increased her military power in Asia. It was therefore incumbent on the British Government to strengthen the North-West Frontier of India, of which the northern passes of the Hindu Kush form a critical point. An annual allowance of six thousand rupees was apportioned to the Mehtar of Chitral and subsidies to neighbouring Chiefs. The projected opening of a direct road to Chitral from the Peshawar frontier was an important feature of the scheme, and Dr. (now Sir George) Robertson was deputed on a mission to Chitral. The Mehtar readily consented to all the British schemes and promised his co-operation in road-making and different fortifications. But in 1892 Aman-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar, died, and from that moment the history of Chitral became one of dynastic murders and civil war. The Mehtar's sons fought for the succession—three were murdered, one was exiled, and the second son possessed himself of the throne. He asked for a British officer to be sent as Agent to Chitral, but in a few months his friendly overtures came to an end, and he was assassinated by his uncle, who possessed himself of the Mehtarship. At this time, the eldest son, who had been exiled, returned to fight for the throne, and the forces declared themselves on his side, and his uncle found himself a refugee after a reign of only two months. The new Mehtar, on acquiring the chiefship, applied for the recognition of the Indian Government and asked for the residency of a British Agent. It was proposed to leave Captain Younghusband an escort of one hundred Sikhs at Mastuj, not Chitral, as it was sixty-three miles nearer to Gilgit and the reinforcements there. As this scheme involved keeping open a line of communication of

two hundred and twenty-five miles from Gilgit, and the maintenance of four intermediate posts, a controversy arose as to whether it would not be better to hand over Chitral to the Amir of Afghanistan. The Government of India advocated the retention of a British officer in Chitral and the strengthening of the Gilgit garrison. It believed that it was essential to the interests of the Government that Chitral should continue under the suzerainty of Kashmir and under British influence, even though there existed a grave risk in sending British officers to Chitral. Nevertheless, the presence of a British officer was necessary to watch events on that part of the frontier, to give the Mehtar necessary support and to protect the interests of the Indian Government.

The Secretary of State, then Lord Kimberley, did not think it would be a wise or justifiable policy to deprive Kashmir of her acknowledged right of suzerainty over Chitral in order to hand it over to an Afghan ruler. He consented to the retention of Captain Younghusband, but only as a temporary measure, for he felt that in the future policy towards Chitral a much wider view must be taken, and the question looked at with reference to the possible changes in the general aspect of affairs in that region, which might in a short time be effected. The safe-guarding of the line of communication should be reduced as much as possible except as regards the actual safety of the British Agent. Lord Elgin's Government decided, in a discussion concerning the withdrawal of the British officer and his escort, that such a policy would not be a wise one.

On succeeding Lord Kimberley as Secretary of State for India Henry Fowler agreed to the former policy as to the retention of Captain Younghusband, but he repeated that the reasons which induced Lord Kimberley to declare that it would be premature to decide then upon the permanent political and military arrangements for this frontier, were still of weight. But he, too, regarded the present arrangements as only temporary, though he thought it impossible within a fixed period to formulate a definite policy, whether of abandoning or of continuing those arrangements.

On January 1st, 1895, the Mehtar of Chitral was shot by order of his brother with whom he was supposed to be on good terms,

but who was nevertheless engaged in forming a conspiracy against him. A British officer representing the Government of India was in Chitral with a small escort when the murder took place, and to him the usurper sent a deputation asking to be recognized as his brother's successor. The reply was that the question would be referred to the Government of India, whose orders must be awaited. In the meantime a detachment of soldiers was sent to Chitral, and Dr. Robertson, who was Political Agent at headquarters, started for Chitral. He arrived on February 1st. In the interval Umra Khan, a tribal Chief, who was doubtless an accomplice in the conspiracy, invaded the State of Chitral with between three thousand and four thousand men. The Chitral force opposing Umra Khan numbered about three thousand men, and they were driven back from their first position. As further successes on the part of the invaders would have been a serious danger to the British Representative, Dr. Robertson was authorized on February 19th to give the Chitralis such material and moral support as might be consistent with the safety of his own party, and to call up reinforcements from the Kashmir regiment at Gilgit if necessary. Early in March Dr. Robertson and his garrison were besieged in their fort.

Although at the beginning of the year the Secretary of State had said in a letter to the Viceroy :

"I am in hearty accord with you in respect of the Frontier policy. We must arrest the unwise attempts of the Military Forward party, and while keeping our foot firmly down where necessary, discourage the costly hunger for constant annexation."

Yet on the news of the siege of Dr. Robertson's garrison he wrote again :

"Events in Chitral have marched since the date of your last letter. I regret much the necessity for the costly preparations which have to be made at Peshawar ; but nothing must prevent every possible effort being made to relieve Robertson and his party," and this was in reply to a full account from Lord Elgin of Dr. Robertson's position written on March 13th, 1895.

"Chitral affairs have occupied us much since last mail. Communications with Robertson are practically cut off, and there is

little doubt that there is an alliance between Umra Khan and Sher Afzul and their being determined to get Robertson out of Chitral. To the best of our belief Robertson is safe in Chitral Fort against any force that could be brought against him. We also believe that there are supplies for the force now there till about the end of April. . . . I think the first step should be to send Umra Khan an ultimatum in terms that they cannot misunderstand. We have already ordered him out of Chitral and we must give him warning that we do not mean to be disobeyed. . . . None of us wish to undertake this expedition. Even if we mobilize, we shall not send our troops across the frontier except as the last resource. But if an expedition does go we shall have to consider what the alternative result of sending it will be. The first and essential thing will be to ensure the opening up of the road from Peshawar to Chitral."

"I may say," explained my father afterwards, "that to my mind the first consideration was to rescue the men who were besieged. They were there representing their Queen and Country and we were bound at all cost to rescue them."

The Secretary of State telegraphed at once to the Government of India, authorizing them to take any action that they might deem necessary to secure the safety of the British force. As the fort of Chitral was nearly two hundred miles from Peshawar, and the intervening country was entirely occupied by independent tribes, it was of the first importance, not only to avoid conflict with them, but, if possible, to secure their friendly co-operation. And it was to attain this object that the proclamation, around which so much controversy raged, was issued in the middle of March. It stated first that notice had been given to Umra Khan, that, unless he retired from Chitral by April 1st the Government would use force to compel him to do so. Second, that the sole object of the Government was to put an end to the present, and to prevent any future, unlawful aggression on Chitral territory; third, that as soon as that object had been attained the force would be withdrawn; fourth, that the Government had no intention of permanently occupying any territory through which they passed, or of interfering with the independence of the tribes; and fifth, that

they would scrupulously avoid any acts of hostility towards the tribesmen, so long as they, on their part, refrained from attacking or impeding in any way the march of the troops. On April 5th the Secretary of State wrote to the Viceroy: "I am interested in your account of the proceedings with reference to the Chitral expedition. The relief of Robertson is a paramount obligation. Our subsequent policy is a matter for consideration."

On the 22nd March the Government of India instructed Colonel Kelly to move forward with such troops as were available in the Gilgit command, and at the same time issued orders for the despatch of the Chitral relief force to be hurried on. These two forces set out for the relief of Dr Robertson from Gilgit on the east, and from Peshawar on the south. The relief force was commanded by General Sir Robert Low. Colonel Kelly, after unexampled difficulties in crossing the Shandur Pass under deep snow, arrived within touch of the enemy on April 8th and defeated them. General Low captured the Malakand Pass on April 3rd, and successfully crossed the Swat river. On the 18th April Umra Khan fled before their advance, and opposition ceased. In the meantime Colonel Kelly reached Chitral on the 20th April, and effected the relief. The conspiring chiefs were scattered, and one was taken prisoner. Umra Khan fled to Afghan territory.

"The Englishmen of to-day," declared Henry Fowler, "and the Englishmen of the future will never forget the unselfish heroism which distinguished Dr. Robertson and his comrades during that memorable siege, nor the splendid courage which characterized the advance from Peshawar and the march from Gilgit."

It was after the complete success of the military proceedings that the controversy as to the conflicting policies arose. Two distinct policies were in turn adopted, and the two succeeding Cabinets are alone responsible. The Government of India advises the Home Government on all aspects, both civil and military, of such grave and difficult questions as the retention or the evacuation of Chitral, but the decision and responsibility in such matters rests entirely on the Cabinet and the Sovereign.

The policy with regard to Chitral was not, as we have seen, a new policy. Two previous Indian Secretaries, Lord Cross and

Lord Kimberley, had considered it ; but after the relief of the fort it became one of the foremost questions of Indian practical politics. The Secretary of State on April 19th, on the day Chitral was relieved, telegraphed for the advice of the Indian Government on the strategical and political importance of Chitral, and for their suggestions as to the best course to be adopted in the future ; and on 25th April he wrote to the Viceroy . “ Directly I return to town I shall have a conference with my colleagues on the whole question ; but if there is one thing that I deprecate more than another at this crisis it is any hurried decision I fully appreciate all the difficulties of the case, and I need hardly say that I attach great importance to the views of your Government ; but there are broad questions of a political, and financial, and also of a military character, underlying any further extension of our responsibility on the North-West Frontier and from all that I can discern, the public opinion of this country is hostile to such a policy.” Lord Elgin had telegraphed that the Indian Government would undoubtedly deprecate withdrawal, and considered the maintenance of the position in Chitral desirable. My father telegraphed in reply, pending the consideration of the Cabinet : “ Please avoid committing Government in any way, either with regard to making new roads or retention of posts now occupied, or occupation of new posts.” The Viceroy telegraphed that the Indian Government were unanimous in asking the permission of the Secretary of State to enter into negotiations with the tribes, with a view to obtaining their consent to the opening up of the road from Peshawar to Chitral, for, without entering into such negotiations, he could not answer as to the extent of political difficulties or the cost of the road. The Secretary of State had no objection to his sounding the tribes as to the terms and conditions on which they would consent to opening and maintaining that road, but Her Majesty's Government would come to no decision until they had received in a despatch the full arguments and opinions of the Indian Government with regard to the policy they advocated. That despatch reached England at the end of May. Its policy was the military occupation of the Chitral Valley and the construction of a road from Peshawar, and was known afterwards as

the Forward Policy. All the arguments in its favour were clearly and ably set forth, and nothing that could be urged in its favour was omitted.

The question was of course primarily a military one—Whether Chitral was of such strategical importance as to be essential as a safeguard from invasion. Such distinguished officers as Sir George White, Lord Roberts, and Sir Henry Brackenbury were of opinion that it was. On the other hand eminent Generals, such as Lord Wolseley, Sir Redvers Buller, Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir Charles Gough, Sir J. Adye, Lord Chelmsford, and Sir Neville Chamberlain, were of a contrary opinion. The Secretary of State conferred with some of the most distinguished military authorities in the Empire, and the majority of such opinions was that the gigantic natural defences of the North-West Frontier could not be strengthened by the military occupation of Chitral, and that the construction of a military road from Peshawar to Chitral would be an advantage to an invading force and a disadvantage to a defending force.

“ House of Commons,

“ 10 June, 1895.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Since I saw you I have received the enclosed two letters from Sir Redvers Buller. The first is in reply to my request for his opinion on the case as stated in your memorandum. The second refers to the Despatch from the Government of India and accompanying papers. These are private letters—he offers me a formal minute ; but with these in our hands a minute is hardly necessary.

“ Yours,

“ H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.”

29, Bruton Street,

“ June 9th, 1895.

“ DEAR MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,

“ I return the papers enclosed with your letter of the 6th June. I have no personal knowledge of the Indian

Frontier and so can only offer a general opinion, but I can unhesitatingly say that a study of these papers has failed to prove to me that it is advisable for us either to open the road to Chitral from Peshawar or to occupy the former place. The arguments in favour of this course seem to me all to depend upon bogeys.

“ There is the Russian bogey, the anarchy bogey, the sentimental bogey, this last the most unsubstantial of the three. For surely we are not ‘ abandoning ’ a place when we withdraw after invading it; and though Lord Lytton may have guaranteed the suzerainty of Chitral to Kashmir, surely he only guaranteed it, at the most, as against outsiders, and the suzerain must deal with the Chitralis himself. On the other hand I would place this selfish view: What can we gain by going to Chitral? Surely the reply is: ‘ Nothing, and that at great cost.’ Lord Elgin says that the following appeals to him strongly as a layman: If we retire from Chitral we shall prejudice one main line of defence, Kabul—Kandahar, because a comparatively small force from the north could come over the Dorah or Baroghil Passes without our having an opportunity of preventing it, and could, and would, then create such uneasiness on our Peshawar Frontiers as would lock up there a British force out of all proportion to itself. I would ask any one to look at the maps and to say which would require the lock-up of the largest force. Holding the line Peshawar—Dir—Chitral—Mastuj in sufficient strength at the latter place—to cover the passes, or merely to hold Peshawar in sufficient strength to neutralize what is left of a small force that has fought its way down that line? The answer seems to me obvious. If we hold Chitral to keep out Russia; Russia can at any time force us to fight her there; and every mile we advance from our proper communications to meet Russia must increase our disadvantages. Had I to defend India I should certainly prefer that Russia should have to come through miles of inhospitable mountain passes to attack me, rather than go myself into the middle of those mountains to meet her. Still less should I be

inclined to make good roads, so as to assist her passage in the event of a temporary success.

* * * * *

“ I am, Yours very truly,

“ REDVERS BULLER.”

“ War Office,

“ 10 June, 1895.

“ DEAR MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,

“ I had unfortunately replied to your first letter on the Chitral question before I received the second—but, if I may be allowed to be irreverent, the second is the same old chestnut, and there is nothing in it that causes me to alter my opinion.

“ If we are going to take up the line Kandahar—Kabul definitely and to base ourselves upon it, I confess that I should like to consider whether I would not place an outpost at Chitral. But this is not the case, and we are really asked, nay, pressed, to occupy the outpost before we occupy our main line of defence. All the arguments used with regard to Chitral as to the effect upon us of an advance of the Russians, appear to me to be equally forcible if applied to Afghanistan, and even more forcible if applied to Afghanistan at the moment, which is predicted, when that country ceases to be under solid government on the demise of the Amīr.

“ Suppose that we occupy Chitral and suppose that the Amir dies, and suppose that the Russians seize Kabul—what then? Why, surely every man we have in Chitral is locked up and wasted. I cannot see the force of the other argument.

“ On the other hand, dealing merely with the occupation of Chitral. If the tribes are hostile, it is admitted that the occupation of Chitral would be too costly. But if the tribes are friendly, why not leave them their own country to protect. It took us 20,000 men to get into it.—Why is it not to take the Russians more? All through this last paper the

Government of India seems to presuppose that the Russians can do without difficulty what we can do only by the expenditure of great force. They allow that it took from us at least a force of 15,000 to get to Chitral, but they assume that the Russians will get there with from 3,000 to 4,000. I fail to find any grounds for this assumption.

“ Yours very truly,

“ REDVERS BULLER.”
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In the meantime, while the question was under consideration, the Secretary of State telegraphed, “ I do not object to the temporary arrangements which you consider necessary.”

Here my father's connection with the Chitral question ended. His successor, Lord George Hamilton, on taking office, announced that the Chitral policy would be reconsidered, and it was subsequently reversed.

My father received the following letters from Lord Kimberley and Lord Northbrook.

On August 14th Lord Northbrook wrote to him :

“ Stratton,

“ Micheldever Station,

“ August 14th, 1895.

“ DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ I cannot quite make out the effect of the orders given about Chitral. They seem to be to some extent a reversal of the decision which I understood you to say that you had sent to India before the eventful decision, but I cannot help thinking that it is a kind of compromise and may not be inconsistent with eventual withdrawal.

“ Perhaps you will tell me how you regard it, and if you intend to raise the question in the House of Commons.

“ I presume that no useful discussion can take place before the papers are given, and especially the opinion and proposals of the Government of India, and the opinions of Sir Donald Stewart and the members of the Council of India. If you

move for papers I hope they will comprise the history of placing an English Resident and small garrison in Chitral, which, apparently was the cause of the whole trouble.

"It would also, I think, be desirable to include in the papers Lord Elgin's speech in the Legislative Council before the Expedition was sent, and any proclamations issued to the Tribes during the progress of the Expedition; for everyone will agree that it is of the first importance to keep faith strictly with the Tribes to whom any promises have been made.

"If you have formed an opinion upon the effect upon the Lancashire elections of the Indian Cotton Duty question, I should like to know it; for, however strong a Unionist I may be, I should greatly regret that your right and courageous treatment of that question, under difficulties which I fully appreciate, should have seriously affected the balance of parties at the recent dissolution.

"Believe me,

"Yours truly,

"NORTHBROOK."

"Kimberley House,

"Wymondham,

"Norfolk,

"August 29th, 1895.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I see in the *Daily News* of to-day that George Hamilton quotes from a despatch of mine, written two years ago, in support of his Chitral policy.

"There is nothing inconsistent in the sentence as quoted in the *Daily News* article with my concurrence with you in your Chitral policy.

"I said that it was important that we should be able to control the external affairs of Chitral, and I am still of that opinion. We could not safely allow Chitral, a dependency of Kashmir, to have direct relations with Russia.

"But neither can we allow Afghanistan to have such rela-

tions, and we control entirely the foreign relations of the Amir with both Russia and Persia. We do not, however, garrison any part of his dominions nor keep a European representative at Kabul.

"It would be quite sufficient to keep a native Agent at Chitral, probably giving the Mehtar a small subsidy, subject to his good behaviour.

"I thought it might be as well that you should know my answer as regards the passage in my despatch, in case it is referred to in the coming debate.

"I never contemplated keeping a detachment of troops permanently at Chitral or more than an occasional visit of a European officer.

"Yours sincerely,

"KIMBERLEY."

Of the outbreak on the North-West Frontier eighteen months later, the former Secretary of State expressed his opinion in a speech which is quoted a little further on; and from his attitude against the Forward Policy he never retreated. Indeed it would be difficult to put one's finger upon any of his policies from which he subsequently retreated. He could advance, he could stand still, but he could not retreat. The days of his Indian rule had been few, but they were great days—great in the life of Henry Fowler as a statesman; great in the life of India and her peoples. He left the India Office with a deep hope that he would one day go back; but when the time, so long delayed, came round, a decade had carried him beyond the three-score years and ten, and robbed him of that power of energy and work which he felt was alone worthy of India's acceptance. He had given her his best, when he was at his best, and she acknowledged it was a worthy offering. When he might have accepted her at a lower price, he refused to do so; for though few know the depth of his personal regret at seeing her go by, yet he put India's interests before his own, and as he always had done, counted patriotism of greater worth than political advantages or personal claims.

His rule over India is a short chapter, but it is a never-to-be-

forgotten one in the history of that country's life during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Of course, in connection with a question of this kind there were many confidential considerations, of a technical and detailed character, which entered into the counsels of those who were advising the Government, and helped towards its decision. As regards the proposed road, many civilian experts and Indian statesmen agreed that a policy of insisting upon open roads, and respecting at the same time the independence of the tribes, was impossible; and that roads could not be effectually kept open and protected for any length of time by merely tribal arrangements, but would have to be protected by regular troops. It therefore appeared to Her Majesty's Government that the construction and defence of the road, even with the consent of the tribes, would be a dangerous policy, and without their consent it would be a violation of the proclamation on the faith of which several of the tribes did not combine against or oppose the march through their territories of the relief force to Chitral. The Home Government therefore came to the conclusion that they would not be justified in accepting the proposals made in the despatch of the Indian Government, and they decided that no military force or European Agent should be kept at Chitral; that the road should not be made; and that the army which had effected the relief operations should return to British territory as soon as possible—all dates and details being left to the discretion of the Indian Government, and on the 13th June, 1895, the Secretary of State telegraphed to the Viceroy:

"I wish to add my personal assurance of the regret with which we arrived at decision not to accept your proposals. Cabinet gave most anxious consideration to the whole question, and consulted highest military authorities in the country, who, excepting Lord Roberts, are generally against retention of Chitral, as are also Political Committee, India Office. The decision of the Cabinet was unanimous. General expression of confidence in you. Your difficulties fully appreciated; I hope you will, nevertheless, be able to submit satisfactory proposals for future." And the Viceroy replied the next day that, while deeply regretting, he loyally

accepted the decision, and a few days later he telegraphed the proposals of the Indian Government for carrying out the policy. On the day that that telegram was received the Liberal Ministers tendered their resignation to Her Majesty. On June 28th the retiring Indian Secretary wrote to the Viceroy his last letter :

“ India Office,
 “ Whitehall,
 “ June 28th, 1895.

“ DEAR LORD ELGIN,

“ The telegraph will have informed you that we have resigned, and that Lord Salisbury is now engaged in forming a Government to take our place.

“ With regard to Chitral, I can only say that we were much gratified by the loyal manner in which you accepted our decision not to adopt your recommendation. We considered the matter most anxiously ; but, in our unanimous opinion, the policy which we adopted is that towards which the weight of authority inclines. I fear the change of Government may cause you some embarrassment and delay in aiming at a final settlement. I, of course, cannot deal with your proposals for the future settlement of Chitral.

* * * * *

“ Before I conclude my farewell letter I must express my appreciation of the cordial relations which have existed between us since I took office, and my sincere gratitude to you for the admirable manner in which you have uniformly discharged the duties of your high office.

“ I am,

“ Dear Lord Elgin,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

The Viceroy wrote to my father on his resignation :

" Viceregal Lodge,

" Simla,

" June 25th, 1895.

" DEAR MR. FOWLER,

" The news of the sudden crisis and resignation of the Government, naturally places me in a position of great perplexity. I am afraid that there can be no doubt that my correspondence with you, which has now lasted for more than a year, and which I shall always look back upon as one of the incidents of my stay in this country most satisfactory to myself, will now come to an end. It is, at any rate, useless for me to trouble you with a long letter.

" I do not suppose it will be possible for you to give us any further instructions in regard to Chitral. The delay is, of course, most inconvenient, but I see it cannot be avoided.

* * * * *

" I can only repeat my regret at this occurrence. I can assure you that there is only one feeling here at the prospect of your ceasing to be Secretary of State.

" I am,

" Yours sincerely,

" ELGIN."

CHAPTER XIX

1894—1895

AT THE INDIA OFFICE

" We measure not his mind ; we cannot tell
What lieth under, over or beside
The test we put him to , he doth excel
We know, where he is tried."

JEAN INGELow.

THE occupation of Chitral was not the only frontier question with which my father had to deal during the short time that he was Secretary of State for India.

There was the Pamirs question, which involved a settlement with Russia and the Amir of Afghanistan. The Agreement with Russia was signed early in 1895, and the Secretary of State wrote of it to the Viceroy : " The restriction on the erection of forts in Wakhan is no doubt to be regretted, nor would it have been agreed to if it had been possible to avoid it ; but I believe that without this provision the agreement would not have been accepted by the Russians, and I agree with you in thinking that it was so important to get the matter settled, that it was worth while to run the risk of increasing our difficulties with the Amir by conceding this point. I hope it may be arranged that the evacuation by the Amir of the territory which he is to give up will take place before the 1st of July." The Viceroy negotiated with the Amir and on April 11th, 1895, the Secretary of State wrote again : " Your proposals to the Amir with reference to the Pamir Agreement are satisfactory as to dates, and I hope he will be ready to carry out his part of the agreement loyally. With regard to the

demarcation, the Foreign Office are, I believe, ready to accept your proposals. The Wakhan question is, no doubt, the difficulty, and I fear the solution you mention is the only possible one. I do not think that it will be possible to guarantee the peace of the territory within the respective spheres, but both Powers will probably undertake to do their best to secure it." The formalities with reference to the Pamirs Commission were complete by June, 1895, and the Commission was not further delayed.

A more difficult question with regard to the frontier was in Waziristan on account of the hostility of the tribes. An agreement had been signed between the Amir of Afghanistan and Sir H. M. Durand for the British Government on 12th November, 1893, by which it was provided, *inter alia*, that :

" 1. The Eastern and Southern Frontier of His Highness's dominions, from Wakhan to the Persian border, shall follow the line shown in the map attached to this agreement.

" 2. The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the Territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan, and His Highness the Amir will at no time exercise interference in the Territories lying beyond this line on the side of India.

" 3. The British Government also agrees to leave to His Highness the Birmal tract as shown in the detailed map already given to His Highness, who relinquishes his claim to the rest of the Waziri country and Dawar.

" 4. The frontier line will hereafter be laid down in detail and demarcated wherever this may be practicable and desirable by Joint British and Afghan Commissioners."

* * * * * *

In pursuance of this agreement the Secretary of State in April, 1894, authorized the Government of India to propose to the Amir that the work of demarcation should be undertaken in the following October. The Government of India desired at the same time to settle their future relations with the Waziris. Though it seemed desirable to postpone the operations until after the hot weather—both the Indian and the Home Governments were

equally desirous that the Amir should not become suspicious that the delay indicated any wish to break faith with him, which of course was not the case.

The Viceroy wrote on April 4th, 1894 :

“ Sir M. Durand arrived yesterday and I have had a long conference with him about the Waziristan delineation. Durand thinks that if we state a definite date in October the Amir will be ready to concur in the proposal to postpone, on the ground of the danger to the troops in the hot weather.”

Lord Elgin further proposed to locate a reserve brigade at Spin, a practically uninhabited tract on the Indian confines of Waziristan—partly because it lay nearest to the most turbulent section of the Waziris, and partly because it was a healthy district and had a fair water supply. The Secretary of State conveyed a caution lest the location of the reserve brigade in Waziri territory should irritate the tribesmen and cause disturbances—but he consented to Spin, on finding that it was not actually in Waziri territory. At this time the Amir wrote in reference to the demarcation of the boundary and there seemed some misunderstanding on his part, though the suggestion of the proposed postponement of the work had not yet reached him. And there was also some perplexity in England about an invitation to the Amir to visit England, which had been promised if he signed the agreement about the boundary. A visit to England had been suggested to the Amir by Lord Salisbury in 1892. Of course such a visit could not take place except during the London season, and already the year was too advanced to arrange it in 1894 ; while to delay it to 1895 might seem to the Amir rather like another unsatisfactory postponement. The details of such a visit from a diplomatic point of view involve many difficulties and there are many *pros* and *cons* to be weighed. The Amir, however, expressed a wish unofficially that he and his two sons should be invited to England. While all this was under consideration the Viceroy received what he described as a highly satisfactory letter from the Amir about the demarcation of Waziristan. His Highness was quite content that it should be done in the autumn, and also approved the arrangements the

Indian Government had proposed. He seemed bent on his own occupation of Birmal and concluded by saying: "But the Waziris should be told this much, that Birmal and its old dependencies, which constitute its limits, belong to the Amir of Afghanistan, and that the remaining Waziris belong to the British Government. To say this much to them would be necessary."

It was, therefore, incumbent upon the Indian Council to decide how they should impart that information to the tribes. The Secretary of State, having conferred with the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, decided that the invitation could be no longer delayed, and he accordingly wrote an autograph letter on June 12th, 1894, to the Amir, conveying the official invitation. The Amir did not reply to that invitation until the beginning of the year 1895. Truly there is no haste in the East. On June 19th, 1894, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State: "We have been discussing the details of our policy in Waziristan, and I will not forestall the statement which I shall have to make to you when a decision has been come to. But I may say that we came to two conclusions last Thursday:

"1.—That through our Frontier officers we should announce to the Waziris what the line of the frontier in the Durand Convention is according to the map, and that we had agreed with the Amir to demarcate on the ground in October; and (2) that our Military Department and the Punjab Government should be instructed to prepare detailed schemes and estimates for the demarcation proceedings in accordance with the plan already reported to you. There remains the third and most important branch of the subject—what policy we are to announce to the tribes in October." On 24th August, the Secretary of State wrote privately to the Viceroy: "In the main I agree with you with respect to Sir A. Lyall's memorandum. You will receive my Waziristan Despatch by this mail. I think that the expansion of your control, which Sir A. Lyall foresees, will ultimately take place, and will probably involve a Political Agency with military posts and increased expense; but there is a wide difference between a gradual movement in this direction and a sudden assumption of the complete administration. Your proposal is the minimum which you

think will, for the present, enable you to maintain order so far as concerns the territory for which you have assumed the responsibility, the Amir's frontier, and the trade routes. No doubt this control will, in the nature of things, develop; but I think the policy you have adopted is, in the circumstances, the easiest. I think also you are right in recognizing that the three sections of the frontier have to be dealt with on different lines, and that our policy in regard to them has to be guided by wholly different considerations.

"In the southern sections military considerations are of little or no importance, and I believe, there is practically no difference of opinion in regard to the unwisdom of a policy which might involve us, now or hereafter, in military operations either in Mekran or Seistan.

"In the Gilgit or northern section, on the other hand, both political and defensive considerations are important, though the dangers which originally caused the occupation of Gilgit have been now to a greater or less extent provided against. Yet when the Russians, under the proposed agreement, come into occupation of Shignan they will be within twenty-four hours' march of Chitral and Mastuj; and no treaty will secure these regions from political intrigue."

On the same day the Secretary of State sent the following despatch to the Governor-General of India in Council, dated India Office, London, 24th August, 1894. This despatch shows what were the Indian Government's official proposals in dealing with them:

"Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor-General of India in Council, dated India Office, London, 24th August, 1894.

"MY LORD,

"I have given very careful consideration to the Letter of your Excellency's Government in the Foreign Department, dated 10th July, 1894, regarding the arrangements to be made for the delimitation of the Amir's boundary on the Waziri frontier, and the consequent arrangements for the

protection of our territory to the south of the Gomal from raids, for the safety of commerce and for establishing in the interests of peace a certain amount of control over the Waziri tribes.

“ 2. Your letter dwells on the frequency of raids and outrages, especially during the first five months of the year, subsequent, that is to say, to the arrangement with the Amir, by which Waziristan was definitely brought within your sphere of influence ; on the extreme difficulty you have had in obtaining any reparation for these outrages, and on the unsatisfactory and undignified conditions under which even this slight reparation has been obtained ; on the necessity more than once imposed on you already of moving troops into the Gomal , and on the absolute inability of the Waziri headmen, in existing conditions, to coerce their recalcitrant tribesmen. You lay stress also on your responsibility, not only for protecting your own territory and the trading caravans that make use of it, but also, under the recent engagement with the Amir for preventing Waziri raids into His Highness's territory, you express your conviction that the policy of controlling these tribes entirely from without by means of tribal subsidies and levy posts without a military backing has failed, and you consider that the time has now come for substituting a policy of more effective protection and of closer relations with the headmen of the Waziri tribes.

“ 3. The present time, you point out, is specially opportune as the tribes are aware that the Amir has foregone all claim to their allegiance, and as there will be a considerable military force collected for the purpose of escorting the Delimitation Commission.

“ 4. Your proposals, as I understand them, are that a portion of the military force collected for the protection of the Delimitation Commission should be left as a permanent garrison either at Spin or in some other suitable locality ; that this would not involve an addition to the force already on the frontier ; but merely a redistribution of it ; that as a preliminary a political officer should be sent to explain

the measure to the headmen of the tribes and if possible obtain their consent ; that no tribute should be exacted from the Waziris, who will be controlled as at present under a system of tribal jurgas, but that increased allowances should be given to headmen and service allowances to the tribes for the employment of levies, the object being, as explained in your 13th paragraph, to discharge your obligations in protecting your borders and posts, and the Gomal caravan route, and in affording to those sections and leading men of the tribes who have thrown in their lot with you by co-operating in the coercion of turbulent characters and the punishment of murderers and robbers, that protection which they deserve, and without which they cannot maintain their position.

" 5. I have likewise given very careful consideration to the minute recorded by the three members of your Council who dissent from the policy advocated in your letter. They are of opinion that the measures proposed, while not going far enough to secure effective control, will inevitably lead to resistance and involve the ultimate destruction of Waziri independence and the assumption of administrative control. They deprecate the assumption of any responsibility towards the Amir to prevent raids across his border, as a consequence of the recent agreement with him, and are of opinion that the existing difficulties may be met by a continuance of the past policy of control from without, supplemented by strengthening our defensive arrangements on the Gomal, and punishing the tribes, when absolutely necessary, by means of hostile expeditions sent into their country. And finally, they draw a strong argument from the present state of the finances against incurring at the present time any avoidable expenditure.

" 6. I should certainly have preferred to adopt the apparently less costly and less extensive programme which their minute advocates, if it held out any hope, in my opinion, of enabling you adequately to fulfil your obligations in regard to your own territory and the trade routes which go through it, and to the Amir and to the well affected among the

tribesmen themselves. But your letter and the correspondence which it encloses convince me that this is not the case, and I concur with you that recourse to punitive expeditions from a distant base would in the long run prove far more expensive, and that, in the existing state of our relations with Afghanistan and with the tribes, it is essential that your Government should be in a position to maintain, if necessary, an effective control over Waziristan.

"7. I consent, therefore, to your adopting the policy of which your Excellency's Letter furnishes the outline. The principle which I desire to lay down for your guidance is that in the execution of this policy your proceedings should be directed exclusively towards the objects stated in paragraph 13 of your letter and recapitulated in this despatch, and should be strictly confined to such measures and operations as may be necessary to their fulfilment. I need hardly add that, since I sanction with reluctance any assumption of fresh responsibilities, and any increase of the public expenditure, I do so in this instance on the understanding that your interference with the tribes and your outlay of money in Waziristan will be kept within the narrowest limits that are practicable. As soon as the details of your scheme can be formulated I shall be glad to learn from you what is to be the strength of the proposed post, and the arrangements for additional levy posts and to receive an estimate of the expenditure involved.

"I have, etc.,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

Arrangements were at once made by the Indian Government to carry out these instructions.

"I am much relieved," wrote Lord Elgin, "that you have approved our policy for Waziristan. We have given instructions that the frontier officers shall continue their negotiations with the tribes and obtain, if possible, the punishment of the murderers of the Maliks. We have also ordered the Waziris to be informed that we are going to send a force there for the purposes of the delimitation." The difficulties, however, of the delimitation were

great. There was a discrepancy between the maps of the British Government and those supplied by the Amir to his Commissioners, and the Waziristan Commissioners could not begin their work until that point was cleared up. The Amir's preparations for the demarcation, to say the least of it, were not hurried, and the Viceroy had still further difficulties to encounter in an expressed military policy that it would be best to send a large force to march through Waziristan, to smash the Waziris up in six weeks and then proceed quietly with the demarcation. To this, however, Lord Elgin would not assent without the sanction of the Secretary of State, and he wrote to him as follows :

" The position of the demarcation of the Afghan frontier is certainly critical. I think the Amir from the first has been keen about demarcation ; indeed he wanted it done at once, before the Durand Mission left Kabul. It seems to me not unreasonable to suppose that the Amir did not rightly understand the maps presented to him at Kabul, as it is always a difficult thing to realize the full effect of a boundary line from seeing it drawn on a sketch map. We know also that misleading reports have been sent to him of what has taken place on the frontier, and I cannot, under these circumstances, be surprised if he manifested some annoyance. We are telling the Amir plainly that we must go by the Convention and the map attached to it, and his Commissioners must do the same. In the meantime it is obviously out of the question to stop our military preparations. We have issued orders to inform the Waziris we are coming, not only to demarcate but to arrange matters with them. As the Commander-in-Chief says of his responsibility that it is necessary to mobilize to have men in reserve, ready to move at a moment's notice, but not crossing the frontier till the necessity arises, we felt we could not refuse. But the force actually used is not to be increased in any way."

On October 20th the Delimitation Commissioner, Mr. R. I. Bruce, C.I.E., arrived with his escort. The Wano Maliks were friendly and exhibited an eager desire for the occupation of Wano and for service under Government, but on November 3rd the Mulla Powindah, with a force of between twelve hundred and two

thousand men, attempted to rush the British camp, with heavy loss to both sides, and Mr. Bruce requested the Commander-in-Chief to let him have a regiment and two guns. The Viceroy still tried to prevent further fighting and to maintain as far as he could under the altered circumstances the professions of peaceful intentions which the Secretary of State had laid down as the basis of his policy, and in these endeavours he was greatly indebted to that distinguished soldier, the late Sir George White. He also authorized Mr. Bruce to issue another proclamation renewing the promise of the Indian Government not to annex the country and to respect local institutions. The work of demarcation continued most amicably between the Amir's and the British Commissioners.

On hearing of the attack on the British camp the Secretary of State wrote: "I was sorry to receive the news of the sharp skirmish in Waziristan. The number of casualties is heavy, but the troops seem to have behaved very well. Though I regret the necessity for further punitive action I approve of the military arrangements and the instructions that you have issued. I am glad to note that it seems probable that further fighting will be avoided."

The necessary punitive expedition under the command of Sir W. Lockhart was authorized on 15th December and arranged by the Commander-in-Chief. "I fear," wrote my father again, "that further operations in Waziristan are imminent. It is very unfortunate that it should be so ; but it is impossible for you to recede from the position you have been forced to take. I think you are quite right to leave the responsibility for the advance of the reserve brigade to the Commander-in-Chief. You had in my opinion no option but to accept his advice, as he is responsible for the military operations.

"It was necessary to make preparations to deal with the tribesmen promptly, and leave no doubt as to the success of the operations should it prove necessary to take strong measures."

Sir W. Lockhart was instructed to keep out the idea of punishment of the tribe as much as possible, and to make it clear that what the Indian Government insisted upon was compliance with their terms in reparation of the attack upon the British camp, and

the punishment only of those who were responsible for it. Also, he was to offer an asylum on British territory to all friendly Malikis with their families and flocks, and to secure as far as possible the co-operation or at any rate the neutrality of the other tribes through whose country the force had to advance, and to issue a proclamation to that effect. Of this policy the Secretary of State entirely approved, though again he struck the warning note against any but absolutely necessary military hostilities. To Lord Elgin :

“ I am in hearty accord with you in respect of the Frontier policy. We must arrest the unwise attempt of the military forward party, and while keeping one foot firmly down where necessary, discourage the costly hunger for constant annexation.” And again a few days later—on January 11th, 1895, he said : “ I am glad to see from the telegrams that the operations in Waziristan are being successfully carried out with comparatively little bloodshed. I entirely approve the terms of the proclamation, which appears to me to state the objects of the expedition clearly and to disown any intention of permanent occupation of the country in unmistakable terms.” This force under Sir W. Lockhart having exacted reparation, withdrew in March, 1895, leaving a wing of native infantry as a temporary measure at Barwand, in addition to the escort of the Delimitation Commissioners.

In a letter on 15th May, 1895, the Government of India submitted revised proposals for the settlement of Waziristan. They had come to the conclusion as the result of further experience, that the proposed post in the neighbourhood of Wano would not be sufficient to exert a restraining influence over the Waziris generally, but with a small post at Wano and a strong one in Upper Dawar they should be able to dominate effectively the whole of Waziristan. This letter was received on June 4th, but my father relinquished office without having replied to it. In August Lord George Hamilton approved the Government of India's proposals.

In January, 1895, a reply was received from the Amir to the invitation to visit England. He accepted it if his health allowed, but, as that seemed doubtful, he definitely accepted for one of his

sons. For another six weeks or two months nothing further was heard, and then it was announced that the Amir himself was not well enough to travel ; in his uncertain state of health it was not advisable for his elder son to leave the country, so the invitation to England was accepted by his second son, Nasrulla Khan, for himself and a suite of seventy. As there was not time then for Nasrulla to visit the Viceroy on his way to England he was invited to do so on his return journey.

The R.I.M.S. *Clive* was detailed to bring the Shahzada and his suite, and they arrived in London on 24th May.

There was an opinion in some circles in England that such an invitation might have been accepted by the elder son, if the Amir himself was not equal to coming ; but the Secretary of State was strongly of opinion that all such criticism should be suppressed, that Nasrulla should be treated as his father's representative, and everything done to avoid giving offence.

The English Government took Dorchester House, Colonel Holford's fine mansion in Park Lane, for the occupation of the Shahzada and his suite. Colonel Talbot was in charge of the party, and found it a somewhat onerous task.

On the 25th May, the Prince of Wales and other royal personages called upon him, and he returned the calls, and in the evening he dined at the Secretary of State's banquet at the India Office and attended the birthday reception afterwards at Brook House. The Queen received him unofficially at Windsor on the 27th, and he attended a levée at St. James's Palace. On 2nd July he paid his official visit to Her Majesty and lunched with her, my father being the Minister in attendance. He paid his farewell visit on 20th July, but he did not leave England till the 3rd September. Nasrulla brought with him an autograph letter from the Amir to my father. It was written on a kind of illuminated parchment enclosed in first a sealed paper envelope, then a plain linen bag, sealed, then another sealed linen bag, which was addressed, and lastly in a blue and gold outer bag bound with a gold cord.

" Translation of a letter from His Highness, the Amir to the Right Hon. Henry Fowler, Secretary of State, dated 26th Showal-ul-Mukarran, 1312," which corresponds to the 23rd April, 1895 :

" After Compliments,

" May it be known to you that as at this time the light of our eyes and precious (son) Shahzada Nasrulla Khan has been appointed to salaam Her Majesty the Great Queen of England and to meet kind friends in those parts, and the loyal and trustworthy Mr. Thomas Acquin Martin, who is an old servant of ours, has been ordered and nominated to accompany our said son, therefore we have written this friendly letter in a few lines so that the said loyal servant may present our friendly letter to you and inquire on our behalf after your health and may also arrange a meeting between our son and you so that my fortunate and precious son may also himself derive pleasure and benefit from a happy meeting with your and may also convey on the part of ourselves who are your sincere friends greeting of pleasure and thoughts of sincere attachment, and single-heartedness, and may himself write an account of your good health after he has seen you, so that he may be satisfied and easy in mind.

" For the rest, what more can be written than our hope (to see you) and our loyal thoughts and wish for your prosperity and advancement and good fortune. May you long live happy and prosperous.

" (Signed) AMIR ABDUR RAHMAN, an undoubted friend of the British Government."

The writing looked very much like Chinese to an utterly uneducated eye.

The programme for Nasrulla's visit was made out with the greatest care and forethought. The entertainment of such foreign Princes is beset with many difficulties. But my father worked hard to make it a success.

On June 7th he wrote to Lord Elgin :

" My brief Whitsun holiday was cut short by my having to return to London to be present at the reception which was given yesterday by the Corporation of London to the Shahzada. To-day I am also going with him down the river to see the docks and shipping. The review at Aldershot on Wednesday was a great success ;

and, in fact, so far all the arrangements have been satisfactory."

It was very interesting to hear the views of these Afghans on modern England. Not only did they seem to be of such a different race from ourselves, but of such a different era altogether. The date of the letter, 1312, seemed so much more appropriate than 1895 to these people and their generation. It was like a glimpse into the far-away, both as regards time and place, to see at day-break in the Dorchester House garden in Park Lane, the group of Eastern figures kneeling with faces towards Mecca, and chanting in the plaintive monotone "There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet." One of the things which my father had to see to was an exact location of the direction of Mecca as considered from Park Lane!

Of Nasrulla's conversation my father repeated little. I doubt whether the Shahzada talked to him with any freedom, as he was in his eyes, more of an Imperial institution than an actual man. He paid great deference to his orders, but that was all. With some of the members of his suite my sister and I had a good deal of talk—of course, through an interpreter; and one man I specially remember as expressing himself intensely shocked by the proceedings at a State Ball, which we had all attended the night before. Naturally I was staggered by such an opinion, but ruthlessly pursued it, until I discovered it was because the ladies themselves danced, which he considered a most improper proceeding. The stately figures of those state quadrilles were most humorously considered as "loose." It was difficult not to laugh. It was only quite the subordinates of the suite who condescended to talk to my mother and the other ladies present, but to my father and brother as men, the greatest deference was paid. This was when the whole party came to tea with us in Princes Gate. Epithets formed the scaffolding of their expression, which were rather quaint though embarrassingly personal. I was surprised at being called "Lady of the blue eyes," and my mother was overpowered at being addressed as "Tender mother of millions." It seemed to strain her domestic capacities even beyond the limit of her elastic heart.

My father used to think that nothing impresses a foreign potentate more than a drive right through London,—the immense extent of that ever-extending city is a simple fact, and a most powerful every-day witness of the greatness of a country which possesses such a capital as London. He was himself never blunted to the wonder of that panorama, and he took care that the son and representative of the Amir of Afghanistan should see London from one end to the other.

"Nasrulla's visit has," wrote the Secretary of State to the Viceroy, "so far been a success, and I think he is thoroughly satisfied with his reception." Before that visit was concluded the change of Government had taken place, and Lord George Hamilton had the difficult duty of bringing it diplomatically to a close, and embarking the young Shahzada on his return journey.

During the last few months that my father was Secretary of State for India he had the one serious illness of his life. It began with an attack of influenza, and heart failure was threatened. As this occurred during the heat of the Chitral controversy he probably put a greater strain upon his powers than they were strong enough at that crisis to stand. All the despatches and papers were submitted to him in bed, and he never laid down the reins even for periods of much-needed rest. My parents never forgot Sir William Harcourt's great personal kindness during this anxious time. He would come most days and sit with my father, giving him the benefit and tonic of his advice, and such strength as his vigorous personality was able to impart. He proved himself much more than a colleague—he was a true counsellor and friend; The worries and weakness which illness brings are doubly difficult to bear when the heavy weight of such momentous and imperial ruling lies upon the sick-bed, as did the Chitral decisions upon my father's. He drew an overdraft upon his reserve of strength, and he could not help but do so, seeing the greatness of the account which he was obliged, at that crisis, to meet. To anxious watchers, of whom, of course, my mother was chief, this was a terrible ordeal; and again and again have I heard her say with gratitude, what strength and comfort Sir William Harcourt's presence brought

into that sick room. In March, 1895, during his illness, he received the following letter :

“ Buckingham Palace,
“ March 5th, 1895.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ Referring to our conversation of a few evenings ago I took an opportunity of mentioning Lady Sandhurst to the Queen for the Crown of India, who at once remarked that she thought Mrs. Fowler had not had it, but certainly ought to, in a way that made me think it had accidentally slipped her memory ; so this accompanying letter puts it right.

“ I moreover have an idea that the Queen may wish to confer it personally, but as this is not much more than an idea I daresay you will only take it as such.

“ Yours very truly,
“ FLEETWOOD J. EDWARDS.”

And a few days later :

“ Windsor Castle,
“ March 12th, 1895.

“ DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,

“ In reply to your letter of yesterday, the Queen quite understands, and at the same time much regrets, that through illness the Secretary of State for India is unable to personally acknowledge, at present, his gratitude for the bestowal by Her Majesty on Mrs. Fowler, of the Order of the Crown of India.

“ The Queen trusts that Mr. Fowler is progressing favourably in health.

“ Yours very truly,
“ ARTHUR BIGGE.


“ Windsor Castle,
“ May 16th, 1895.

“ The Queen hopes she may herself confer the Crown of India on Mrs. Fowler on her return from Scotland.”

In reply to these my father wrote, directly he was well enough :

“ 15, Princes Gate,

“ S.W.

“ Mr. Fowler presents his humble duty to Your Majesty and asks leave to tender his grateful acknowledgment of the high honour Your Majesty has conferred upon him by granting to Mrs. Fowler the Order of the Imperial Crown of India. 

“ Mr. Fowler is deeply concerned at the necessity for the military operations recently undertaken by the Government of India, but he regards the duty of relieving Your Majesty's representative at Chitral as of supreme importance, and he trusts that the expedition which is now advancing towards Chitral will rapidly and successfully accomplish its object.”

To which the Queen herself replied :

“ Windsor Castle,

“ May 17th, 1895.

“ The Queen has to thank Mr. Fowler most sincerely for his kind letter and the very kind way in which he has attended to her wishes, and the pains he has taken to ascertain the wording of the Establishment of the Order of the Indian Empire.

“ The Queen Empress has been much interested with the account of Nasrulla Khan and would like to retain it if she may.”

He also wrote to my mother :

“ India Office,

“ Whitehall, S.W.

“ Tuesday.

“ MY DARLING LOVE,

“ I have just got a note from Buckingham Palace from the Queen's secretary as follows :

“ ‘ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ ‘ The Queen desires me to inform you that she

wishes to confer the Order of the Crown of India upon Mrs. Fowler and Lady Sandhurst.'

" I send you my dearest congratulations and am delighted that you are to be enrolled among the great ladies who have this distinguished order.—Love to the girls,

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F."

After the Indian Secretary had recovered from his illness the Queen herself suggested that, though contrary to precedent for a Secretary of State in the House of Commons to be absent while Parliament was sitting, he should be her Minister in Attendance at Balmoral for a period of change and rest to recruit his health after his recent serious attack. And to this kind consideration on the part of Her Majesty he probably owed his complete recovery.

Before he left Balmoral, the Queen gave him a large engraving with these written words :

" The Queen sends Mr. Fowler an engraving which may interest him, being the representation of herself and all her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren as they were in 1887 at the time of the Jubilee, and which she hopes he will accept in recollection of his visit here this spring."

She also presented him with two beautifully bound copies of her own " Journals in the Highlands," an autograph inscription inside, and a signed photograph of herself. These gifts he acknowledged thus :

" Balmoral Castle, 1895.

" Mr. Secretary Fowler presents his humble duty to Your Majesty and asks for permission to tender his most grateful acknowledgment of Your Majesty's gracious gift, ' The Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands,' and of ' More Leaves from the Journal of Life in the Highlands,' and of Your Majesty's photograph and autograph.

" Mr. Fowler will always cherish this expression of Your Majesty's favour as a memento of the visit to Balmoral in

which he enjoyed the high honour and the great pleasure of being the Minister in Attendance on Your Majesty."

On June 25th, just after his return to London and the resignation of the Government, he received another autograph letter from the Queen. All the letters from Her Majesty, included in this book, were written throughout and directed by herself.

↗

" Windsor Castle.

" The Queen Empress returns the corrected warrant and thanks Mr. Fowler for having it so quickly rectified. What photographs would he wish the Queen to send him for the album for the Shahzada ?

" The Queen Empress will very deeply regret losing Mr. Fowler's valuable services.

" June 25th, 1895."

On June 30th Sir Fleetwood Edwards wrote to him about the proposed decoration of the Grand Commander of the Star of India, an honour bestowed upon him on the conclusion of his Indian Secretaryship of State, and the Order of the Crown of India, which was to be conferred upon my mother.

" Windsor Castle,

" June 30th, 1895.

" DEAR MR. FOWLER,

" I have ascertained that the Queen will give the Crown of India to Mrs. Fowler on Monday next when you come down to deliver up your Seals. So if you and Mrs. Fowler come by the 1-15 p.m. from Paddington there will be a carriage to meet you. I think you asked me to ascertain the nature of the ceremony so far as Mrs. Fowler is concerned. It will be a very quiet one, and Mrs. Fowler will of course be in ordinary morning dress.

" Yours sincerely,

" F. J. EDWARDS."

Accordingly my parents both went down to Windsor, and it was, I believe, a unique experience for husband and wife to be invested with Orders on the same day.

A considerable number of Ministers on both sides were delivering up and receiving the Seals of Office on that occasion, and my mother said that a kind of boyish nervousness prevailed as they waited to be sent one by one into the presence of the Queen. She described how they all felt rather as if they were being sent for into the Headmaster's study, and were quite relieved when another name than their own was called. She herself was the first to be summoned, and the Queen herself pinned on the Order of the Crown of India, and said a few gracious words. When my father went afterwards he did not know that his two ceremonies, that of knighthood and of delivering up the Seals, had to be distinct, and that between he ought to go out of the room for a second and re-enter it, but the Queen smilingly put him right.

On the change of Government Lord Sandhurst wrote to my father from Bombay :

“ MY DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ It is with very great regret that I see the resignation of the Government, and I can assure you that in Bombay all will immensely regret your retirement from the India Office. While you have been there, the attitude you have taken up, and the speeches you have made have commanded universal respect and admiration. In India it seems the only interest in English politics is who is the Secretary of State; and we shall be most fortunate if your successor will command the same confidence that you have done.

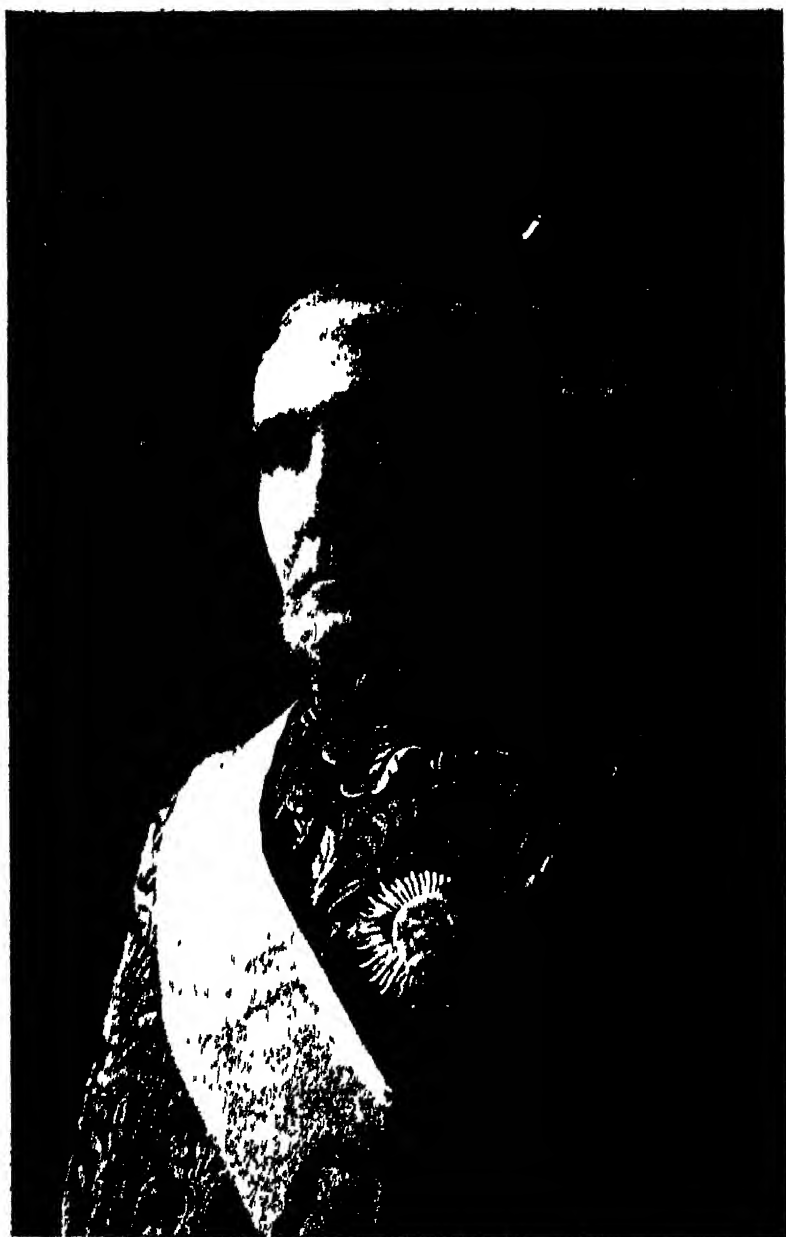
“ I have to thank you for much personal kindness and I am extremely sorry to lose you as my chief,

“ Believe me, dear Mr. Fowler,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ SANDHURST.”

This letter crossed one my father had written.



SIR HENRY FOWLER, G.C.S.I.

" DEAR SANDHURST,

" You will have seen by the telegrams in the newspapers that we have resigned and are now only holding office pending the appointment of our successors. I have to thank you for several letters which pressure of business has compelled me to leave unacknowledged ; but which I read with interest.

* * * * *

" This is my farewell letter to you as Secretary of State, and I cannot end it without expressing my regret for the severance of an official connection, which, short though it has been, has been of the most cordial kind and makes me, on leaving office, recollect with perfect satisfaction that Her Majesty, on my advice, appointed you to an office in which I feel sure you will render great service to the Government of India, and permanently enhance your political and administrative reputation.

" I am,

" Yours sincerely,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

There was one notable piece of work of my father's in connection with India, which though beginning with his Secretaryship of State was not completed by him until after he had been out of office for some years, and that was his work for Indian finance.

As early as 13 April, 1894, Lord Harris alluded to the great disadvantage to India of the fall of the rupee. " I am sorry to say," he wrote to the Secretary of State, " we are losing a lot of good men just now, particularly on the judicial side. The fact is that a man with a wife is better off on £1,000 a year at home than on Rs.2,300 out here, with the rupee at 1s. 2d. or under ; and I fear you will find it the same all over India." And the Secretary of State as a practical business man replied : " I am sorry to hear what you say as to the effect of the fall in exchange in causing you to lose many good men prematurely. I hope, however, that

this effect will not be very far-reaching. Apart from prospect of advancement I cannot but think that it would be in most cases more advantageous to an officer to draw Rs.2,300 a month, a considerable part of which would at least be spent in India where its purchasing power is probably not seriously diminished and which even at rs. 2d. is equal to £1,600 a year, than £1,000 a year in England—especially as, if he has to remit some of his pay the Exchange Compensation allowance enables him to do so up to £1,000 a year at rs. 6d.—and if he has no remittance to make, the allowance is still granted in addition to salary. This arrangement appears to be as liberal as the present state of finances would justify—but, of course, it still leaves salaries far below what they were in the palmy days when the rupee was equivalent to 2s.” My father never believed in over-stating a case to strengthen it. In this reply he first eliminated all that could savour of exaggeration and put the case on a purely business-like footing, and then he turned his attention towards the actual wrong that required remedying. Lord Harris, from all the letters, seems to have been greatly depressed by the financial state of affairs. “It is taking all the life out of us,” he wrote. And certainly nothing tends more quickly to diminishing spirit and light-heartedness than a creeping and unpreventable diminution of means. All Indian life was touched by this paralysis. “Your calculations as to the respective values of a Collector’s pay and a pension of £1,000,” wrote the Governor of Bombay again, “are no doubt quite correct from a hard-cash point of view, but human nature is also a factor and an important factor”

The Governor of Madras also wrote as early as March, 1894 : “Public attention is being concentrated on the all-absorbing financial question, and the compensation allowance is being vigorously attacked.” He also pointed out that the salaries quoted in the Civil Service lists are at an assumed 2s. rupee, and therefore in the rise of promotion the Indian Civil servants were not receiving the salaries which they had looked to as their due, and which the falling rupee was diminishing practically by nearly one-half, and new candidates had not the same inducement to join. “The Exchange Compensation,” replied the Secretary

of State, "was settled before I assumed my present office. There is no doubt that the grievance it is intended to alleviate is a very genuine one, and I think that the feeling here is that the arrangement which has been made is on the whole as satisfactory as could be expected. It would certainly be a very serious matter if the fall in the rupee has the effect of causing the older officers to retire from the service prematurely, but I am not aware that up to the present there has been any material increase in premature retirements, and I hope that the emoluments of the higher offices in the services are still sufficient to make a continuance in them preferable to retirement on pension. With regard to the recruits, the recent revision of the conditions of entrance has been successful so far in attracting what I believe to be a good class of young men, who have taken high honours at our Universities, and the Indian Civil Service still offers attractions which are superior in many respects to those of other professions."

During the whole time my father was at the India Office the difficulty and danger of the falling rupee overshadowed it—and it was as late as 1898, three years after he left office, before he was able to practically help towards the settlement of this important question. The following memorandum from the India Office and the letter which appeared in the *Times* after his death in 1911 signed "A." gives the best possible definition of my father's connection with the Indian Currency Question :

"In 1893 the Indian Mints were closed to the coinage of silver for the public. This was intended to lead to the permanent establishment of the exchange value of the rupee at rs. 4d. and, as events ultimately proved, was by far the most important step towards that end. But for nearly five years after the closing of the Mints the rupee failed to rise to the desired value ; and in 1898 the Government of India, desiring to hasten the rise, submitted to the Secretary of State drastic proposals for that purpose, including the sale of bullion of at least £6,000,000 worth of rupees and the issue of a sterling loan to make good the loss involved. In April, 1898, the Secretary of State referred these proposals for consideration to a large Departmental Committee with Sir H.

Fowler as Chairman. By the time the Committee reported (July, 1899), the rupee had risen to rs. 4d. and the necessity, if it existed, for action of the kind proposed by the Government of India had passed away. But Sir H. Fowler's Committee did extremely valuable service as follows :

“ 1. It considered with remarkable thoroughness all the alternative schemes for Indian currency for which responsible advocates could be found, viz. : (A) the continuance of the policy, inaugurated in 1893, of keeping the Mints closed to the coinage of silver for the public and attempting to maintain the rupee at rs. 4d. ; (B) keeping the Mints closed, but reducing to rs. 3d. the value at which the attempt should be made to maintain the rupee ; (C) re-opening the Mints to the free coinage of silver. A large majority of the Committee strongly approved the first alternative ; their opinion carried at the time very great weight indeed ; and it has been brilliantly justified by success.

“ 2. The Committee recommended the formation of what is now known as the Gold Standard Reserve. This Reserve, now amounting to nearly £20,000,000, is one of the most important safeguards for the maintenance of the exchange value of the rupee. The Committee also recommended that the British sovereign and half-sovereign should be made legal tender in India. This recommendation was in due course carried out, and has been of value in providing an additional element of stability in the Indian Currency system. The further recommendation that gold should be coined in India has not been carried out.

“ The qualities displayed by Sir H. Fowler as Chairman of the Committee were as follows :

“ 1. He never pretended to be a master of all the intricacies and technicalities of the subject. He confined himself to important questions of principle.

“ 2. Nevertheless, his strength of character and aptitude for business made him a most powerful and influential chairman. On matters of procedure, an important point in a large committee composed of conflicting elements, his word was law. In matters relating to the subject matter of the inquiry, it was listened to with very great respect.

" 3. He made the Committee work. In little more than a year they held 43 meetings, examined 49 witnesses (to whom they addressed 13,122 questions) and produced a Report which, though not long (as such documents go), needed very careful drafting in view of the difficult and controversial nature of the questions discussed."

The then Secretary of State wrote to congratulate the late Indian Secretary on the publication of his report :

" India Office,

" July 10th, 1899.

" DEAR SIR HENRY,

" You must let me congratulate you upon the admirable arrangement, lucidity and sequence of your report. It is one of the most convincing documents I have ever read, and will, I am sure, receive unqualified approval from economists and experts.

" You have done a great service not only to the Indian exchequer, but to the currency system of the world.

" Believe me, yours very truly,

" GEORGE HAMILTON."

And again a few months later, with the gift of a massive silver inkstand, copied from the old inkstands which were formerly used at Cabinets :

" India Office,

" November 2nd, 1899.

" MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

" The Council of India have asked me to forward to you as a small memento, the accompanying inkstand, to note the great service you have rendered to India by your chairmanship of the Currency Committee of 1898-99.

" Believe me, yours very truly,

" GEORGE HAMILTON."

My father's work in connection with the Currency question was

thus alluded to in a letter which appeared after his death in the *Times* of March 1st, 1911 :

“ LORD WOLVERHAMPTON AND INDIAN CURRENCY.

To the Editor of the *Times*.

“ Sir,

“ In your interesting biography of the late Lord Wolverhampton you make no reference to his important and valuable service as Chairman of the Indian Currency Committee of 1898-9.

“ The main business of the Committee was, first, to report in the light of experience, on the soundness or otherwise of the main lines of the currency system introduced into India in 1893, when, in accordance with the recommendations of Lord Herschell's Committee, the Calcutta and Bombay Mints were closed to the free coinage of silver for the public, and, secondly, to suggest any measures that might seem desirable for the improvement or completion of the system established in 1893.

“ The inquiry was one of unusual difficulty. The subject matter was at once highly technical and highly controversial. The members were scarcely a body of experts, but had been selected almost on the principle of allowing a representative to each interest claiming to be substantially affected by the Indian currency system. On the same principle, applications from persons desiring to give evidence were acceded to with considerable liberality. Thus the duties of the Chairman were very onerous and delicate; and the skill and assiduous attention with which they were performed called forth general admiration.

“ It is scarcely necessary to add that the results of the Committee's work have proved highly important to India and the financial world generally. They include the final decision to adhere to the policy inaugurated on the advice of the Herschell Committee, the statutory recognition of the sovereign as legal tender in India and the establishment of a separate fund (now known as the Gold Standard Reserve)

from the profits of such coinage of rupees as the Government of India from time to time undertakes.

" I am, etc.,

" A.

" February 27th, 1911."

So ended Henry Fowler's connection with the India Office. He parted from it with the deepest regret ; and with equal regret did India, both in her great Department at home and in her wider local and public opinion, part from him. He was a true friend of India and he was a strong friend of India. And of all his life's many works he looked back, perhaps with greater satisfaction on his work for India than on any other. And the reason for this was at the very root of him. India was above and beyond the party politics which were for ever hampering and hindering his ideal of that true statesmanship which he would wield for the service of his sovereign, his Empire, and his fellow-men.

For long afterwards, echoes from India kept sounding in my father's ears of the appreciation there of his Secretaryship of State. He had held that office for less than eighteen months, and yet he had stamped his impress upon the unchangeable surface of the Government of India in a really remarkable way.

" We cannot take leave of Sir Henry Fowler," wrote a leading Indian paper, " without an expression of profound respect and admiration for his disinterested and courageous conduct. Anglo-Indians are almost to a man Unionists in English politics. We do not suppose that one European in twenty amongst us is a Radical ; but we all desire above all things that in matters connected with India, the interests of the country should not be subordinated to the exigencies of English political strife. No Secretary of State could have resisted party demands and class manoeuvres more manfully than Sir Henry Fowler. The title of G.C.S.I. which the Queen has conferred upon him is a proper tribute to his success in one of the most difficult and responsible posts under the Crown. It is right and fitting that he should be thus honoured by his Queen, but we think there should be added

to the decoration which he has received from his Sovereign, a public acknowledgment from India of the respect and esteem in which he is held, and of our hearty appreciation of the sound principles upon which he has conducted the duties of his high office. Such a tribute would come with the greatest significance from a body of men, who, in English party politics are opposed to him; and it would be also a sign that in India we value the work done for us all the more if it is independent of party exigencies or interest. It was feared when Lord Kimberley's successor was appointed that India would have cause to rue the day. The experience and record of the new Secretary of State were such as to prejudice opinion in this country, where it was feared that he would apply a parochial standard to Imperial questions of vast importance and far-reaching consequences. No Secretary of State could have started less hopefully, and we in India failed to appreciate the advantage of the application of a fresh mind to Eastern problems. But even in the speech at the farewell banquet to Lord Sandhurst, a distinctive note of character was sounded. Sir Henry might be wrong in the optimist view he took of Indian finance, but there could be no mistake in the proud ring of national assertiveness. 'There had been some silly talk of abandoning India,' he remarked, 'but it was hardly necessary to notice such foolishness. The English people will continue to hold India with all the tenacity of grip characteristic of the race.' It was not long before the people of India began to realize that in this reticent, untried representative they had at last got the strong statesman whom they so sadly needed. If the claims of Sir Henry Fowler to the gratitude of India rested only on his action in connection with the cotton duties, they would be irresistible, but there has not been a question of importance to India during his term of office which he has failed to mark by some fresh display of unflinching fairness and independence of judgment. In all matters affecting the national safety and credit, he has shown that patriotism is better than partisanship, and the record of his Indian career may well serve to recall the vigorous policy of the Whigs in the best days of Palmerston, before the genesis of Home Rule and the apotheosis of Radicalism."

And again another Indian paper said :

" In this change of Government India loses the best Secretary of State it has had during recent years, and to that extent the political change will be a subject of regret to all classes in this country. With an unusually long experience of political ups and downs as regards India, and refreshing our recollections by a reference to historical authorities, we cannot recall any Secretary of State of either political party who has rendered better service to India than Sir Henry Fowler during his relatively short incumbency at the India Office."

And such echoes as these have never, even to the present day, died completely away. Again and again have we met men from India—soldiers, civilians, business men, chaplains, men of all ranks and opinions—and they have united in the one eulogy which India pronounced on my father's rule there.

That great office gave him for one brief year and a half his chance of proving his power of statesmanship, and I venture to think—and not I alone—that it was a loss to the nations that all further opportunities were closed to him until a decade later, when, at seventy-five years of age, the fires were burning low, and the forces weakened, and he felt his strength unequal to the strain of taking up again the work of a great Department.

There are those who think that by nature he was not a leader of men, but they can only judge by the conditions of circumstances which failed to claim his powers of leadership. Had those circumstances been otherwise, it is impossible to diagnose what his response would have been. And though he might not have possessed that genius for leadership, which rises but rarely along the line of the centuries, and cannot be denied; yet he was a man who could always respond to a great call—a man who had been dowered with the ten talents, and who, by his worthy use of them, might have been fitted for the ruling of the ten cities which are hidden in the mists of the might-have-been.

Perhaps many who read this record have not realized how brief were the days of his opportunity in the years of his manhood's full strength. They only know how much he did, and how tightly those three short years were packed with success. It seemed hard

luck on him that the next Administration stretched out into double its average span, and so he lost the opportunities that life could never bring him again.

But Henry Fowler gauged not anything by luck, and it seems sacrilege to apply such a word to the Providential leading in which he so firmly believed, and to which he so confidently clung. Though the hopes with which he began his waiting faded away into the certainty that the time which was passing was taking his chances with it, and that the second Unionist Government meant the annihilation of his official life, yet he showed no bitterness, nor impatience, nor complaining at events. There came out again that striking characteristic of his—the response to a great call. He could not wait five minutes for his carriage or his dinner without extreme impatience; but to wait ten long years for what would at best, then, come too late, was a big enough thing for Henry Fowler to do, and he did it in the quietness and confidence which alone supplies such strength.

CHAPTER XX

1895—1896

OUT OF OFFICE

“ A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm.”

TENNYSON.

AS early as February, 1895, in a letter to Lord Elgin my father said : “ You must not be surprised at any sudden change in the Government here. Our majority is small and uncertain.” In June the actual blow fell. As Henry Fowler himself told the story : “ A responsible Minister of the Crown had stated that there was ample ammunition for the present year in store, but the House of Commons declined to believe that statement, and by a majority of seven a vote of censure was passed on that Minister, or rather on his permanent advisers. It had been stated that in the resolution which caused the Government to resign, the House of Commons was not expressing personal distrust of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, but only stating that in their judgment the information supplied to him was incorrect. There was one answer to that. If it had not been intended to censure Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, and, of course, to censure the Government, that question could have been raised on another vote altogether. On the contrary, the Opposition chose to deal the final blow to the Government. Although he confessed that the vital blow was not the minority of seven, but the majority of seven the night before. When a Government majority sank to seven it needed no expert to see the end was not very far off.”

The General Election of 1895 was one of those which record the turn of the pendulum in a sharp and marked degree. Many were the theories and statements concerning the country's change of opinion, but of such changes there was no adequate explanation. The tide turns—it always has turned—it always will turn ; and there are health-giving properties in this perpetual ebb and flow of political life. There is a danger when, owing to over-large majorities, the tide fails to turn, and some of the water stands till it stagnates, and some of the scum, which ought to have been swept away, gathers and grows foul. “Everybody has a theory of the cause of the Liberal defeat,” said Henry Fowler. “I have one myself, but I shall not tell it, because I am not sure that it is the right one. But the fact remains that we have been beaten, and I am not one of those who will attempt to explain it away. Mr. Bright once told the politicians of a generation ago that it was not possible to drive half a dozen omnibuses through Temple Bar at once. We tried to do that and we have failed. The country has decided against us with respect to certain questions, and the details of certain measures, and to the verdict of the country we must bow. I hope we shall take our defeat in good temper, manfully and hopefully. The Liberal party has been beaten before—so has the Conservative party. The Conservative party will be beaten again, and the Liberal party will, no doubt, have another triumph. We must loyally accept the decision of the country, and if the new Government proposes good legislation, it will be a disgrace to us if we oppose such legislation simply because it is the Tories who are to carry it out. Our duty will be to support any measures which are likely to be a benefit to the people. Her Majesty's Opposition have a duty to the Government, to the Parliament, and to the country, and that duty is to uphold the principles of constitutional self-government, to apply those principles to the advantage of the masses of the people, to be loyal to those great Parliamentary institutions which are at the bottom of all our freedom, all our progress, all our success ; and to uphold the dignity, the power and the efficiency of Parliament. I, as a member of the Opposition, shall feel that I am representing the best judgment as well as the political opinions of the masses of my constituency

if I endeavour to carry out the same principles in Opposition as I have done in power."

Had Mr. Bright been living to-day one imagines that his simile would have contained a considerable number of taxicabs in addition to his humble, but fatal, six omnibuses.

The opinion which my father really held with regard to the defeat is thus given in his own words: "The real defeat of the Government took place upon the question of Welsh Disestablishment, though it was popular to represent it as having been caused by the supply of cordite."

The constituency of East Wolverhampton was unaffected by the great political reaction outside. After a contest, in which my father was opposed by the late Mr. Rupert E. C. Kettle, he was returned by a majority of 1,034. This contest was conducted on the same lines as all his former contests in every election in which he was a candidate. To use his own words: "We shall fight this battle out fairly, pleasantly, and I hope without any loss of mutual respect; and above all we shall avoid, I trust, as an evil thing, any approach to personalities, or to snatch even the victory of a single vote by any unfair misrepresentation of a political opponent."

This principle of charity and fair-mindedness which he preached in election times, he himself practised at all times. In speaking of the Conservative Government later he said: "Although they might disagree with the policy of their opponents and think their views mistaken, their administration unsound, or their legislation unwise, happily they had arrived at the time when they did not impute to any body of men, especially the Cabinet of the Queen, dishonourable and improper motives, or charge them with corrupt conduct. They had got beyond the personal element in politics. He was, as they knew he had been, at all events from 1885 to 1892, a strong, consistent and determined opponent of the Tory Government, but he never attributed to them unworthy motives. He was opposed to the present Government, but he believed them to be honourable men, desirous of serving their Queen and country, and incapable of any dishonourable conduct."

Neither did Henry Fowler fail to give honour to those to whom

honour was due, even in the field of political rivalry. He spoke in January, 1896, of Mr. Chamberlain's action with respect to the invasion of the territory of a friendly power by the troops of a Company holding the Charter of the Crown, as "wise, prompt and successful," and that he wrote and told the Colonial Secretary so himself is indicated by this reply from Mr. Chamberlain :

" 40, Prince's Gardens,
" January, 13th, 1896.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" Many thanks for your kind note which, let me say, does not surprise me from you, who have always known how to distinguish between political differences and personal animosity. I am both surprised and pleased at the generous appreciation of my work which has come from unexpected quarters, and I regard it as a good sign, a proof of the inherent patriotism which in times of crisis animates all sections of English politicians. I hope now that whatever may be in store for us in the future, we may be able to differ as friends and not as enemies.

" Yours very truly,
" J. CHAMBERLAIN."

During this election campaign Henry Fowler showed his own fairness of mind even amid the heated and exaggerated sentiments of the political fight. He said that " although during a portion of the late Conservative Administration trade had become rapidly worse, it would be unjust and untruthful to say the Conservative Government was responsible for it. A Government could not make a good or a bad harvest any more than it could make the sun rise half an hour earlier. There was however," he went on to say, " one thing which Governments could do. They could make the conditions of the working people better, and that was what he and his colleagues had endeavoured to do. The question that had been considered was whether colliers should only work eight hours from bank to bank, and he had always voted in favour

of that measure, and he should do the same again. He had long been of opinion that eight hours a day was quite long enough for any man to work underground. The late Government had introduced the eight hours system into all their departments of business, and not only had they not reduced the wages, but they had been brought up to the standard of fair wages—trade union wages—and the increase had already reached a sum of thirty thousand pounds a year. They had also appointed a considerable number of working men as inspectors, also women as inspectors, to which he attached enormous importance, in order to protect the condition of women and children. Personally, he had taken great interest in the condition of the aged poor. It was upon his advice that a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the condition of these people. The Report of that Commission had only recently been presented, and neither the past nor the present Government had had time to fully consider what its recommendations were. He thought, however, and he believed that all parties agreed with him, that the time had come when those who had honourably and laboriously passed a life under conditions which would not allow them to save money, and were in old age left practically unprovided for, had a claim on the public for provision in their old age. He did not think that honest, decent people over the age of, say sixty-five, should be compelled to go into the workhouse, and the State ought to make provision for them to enable them to have the comfort of their own homes, and to that extent they should be pensioners."

And after alluding to the Bills which were passed in the House of Commons, but defeated in the House of Lords, he said: "Where two bodies are entrusted with the passing of laws one of them, if they differ, must give way, and the one to give way is not the one that represents the people.—The will of the House of Commons must prevail."

It was during the General Election that two of the most important members of the late Government lost their seats. Sir William Harcourt was defeated at Derby, and Mr. John Morley at Newcastle. Another seat was immediately found for Sir William in the West Division of Monmouthshire, and Mr. John Morley

was returned for the Montrose Burghs the following year. They both wrote to my father:

“ Cluny Castle,

“ Kingussie, N.B.,

“ July 21st, 1895.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Many thanks to you for writing to me so kindly. I take my defeat very coolly. It is not by any means without some very abundant compensations.

“ I was concerned to see that your strength was not to be trifled with. Take care of yourself. You will be sorely needed on that unlovely bench.

“ My campaign was horribly fatiguing. This air is excellent. We are only here for another day or so. After that, most likely to London.

“ Our host and hostess are full of friendly words about you.

“ Kindest regards to your ladies,

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ J. MORLEY.”

“ Malwood,

“ Lyndhurst,

“ July 31st, 1895.

“ DEAR FOWLER,

“ I was just on the point of writing to you when I received your welcome letter this morning.

“ I agree with you that it is little use attempting a solution of the rout. What beat me at Derby was the ‘ bad trade ’ cry. There are 6,000 votes in the Railway Works. The men had been on four days a week and the Co. put them on full time the day of the dissolution. Nothing could stand against that. The other works did the same. Of course the Church and the publicans poured their oil on the flames, but it was the desire for a change amongst the artisans that did the work.

“ I am all for winding-up as soon as possible. We are not

now responsible and it will be our business not to put forward any policy but to examine theirs when it is produced.

"I have a letter from J. Morley, who learns that they will have a sort of Irish land 'continuation' Bill next month, which is to keep things going till February, when they begin their career with a new Irish Land Act !

"I understand the Speaker is to be elected on the 12th August. I do not know whether they mean to dismiss Gully or not. If they do, I do not see that we can do more than enter a solemn protest.

"I hear from C. Bannerman that he proposes to go abroad next week, but I have warned him that there may very likely be a very large supplementary Estimate for cordite which he will be bound to look after.

"J. Morley says nothing about his return to the H. of C. though I have strongly pressed him.

"It is very disgusting to have left these fellows such a splendid surplus as they will have.

"I estimated the increase of Revenue over last year at £1,500,000. It is already £2,500,000 (apparently £2,800,000). The increase in stamps, which I put for the whole year at £1,300,000, is already £1,682,000 and, of course, will be much greater. Income Tax and Excise largely in excess of Estimate. The beer duty for the principal election week, an increase of £330,000, which means 1,000,000 barrels or 36,000,000 gallons—no doubt a gallon for every man, woman and child of gratuitous beer. I shall get out the exact figures when Parliament meets.

"But whatever their surplus, they will spend more.

"We shipwrecked mariners must collect together and establish a sort of Robinson Crusoe life on our desert island.

"I intend to be in town on Saturday the 10th. I hope we may manage to meet then and have a little talk over affairs.

"Like yourself I am slowly recovering from a great fatigue.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

Early in that year, while the Liberals were still in office, Sir William Harcourt had thus written to my father on the subject of the Revenue :

“ Treasury Chambers,

“ Whitehall, S.W.

“ January 4th, 1895.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I am sorry to hear that you have been amiss as I should have been very glad of your valuable advice and aid at this critical estimate time.

“ As far as *Revenue* is concerned we are doing well enough, though not quite as well as the uninformed public suppose. The Stamps are very good, but that is not wholly due to our new taxes, which will realize just about what was expected, *i.e.*, one million ; but there is a large increase also in Succession and Legacy duties (which are not affected this year by the new system) and also in *general* stamps. On the other hand, Excise will fall short. We have got nothing—or next to nothing out of our 6d. on spirits. On that head in Customs and Excise we shall fall short £600,000 of the Estimate. Beer, on the other hand, has done better than was expected, and we shall get a good deal more than the Estimate.

“ Customs have done well in all but spirits, and though we shall lose £160,000 on that item we shall make it up on tea and tobacco, so we may count on our Estimate and something more.

“ *Income Tax* will be this year a darker horse even than usual, as the actual effect of our deductions and allowances is problematical but, on the whole, Milner expects to realize his Estimate, though the assessments for this year are deplorably low.

“ On the whole E. Hamilton (who is generally pretty accurate in his forecasts) calculates a Revenue excess of £300,000 above Estimate, which, taking into consideration the falling-off in spirits, is very good. This, added to an

estimated surplus of £300,000 should give us £600,000 or £700,000 realized surplus.

" We unfortunately get less than usual out of the balance of savings and supplementary Estimates (which are large) and cannot count upon more than £100,000 from that source.

" However, considering that this Budget made more changes in the system of taxation and was subject to more chances of error than, I think, any before it, we may consider that we shall come out of it very creditably.

" But the crux is *next year's* Revenue and Expenditure. The best calculations we can make give us an estimated surplus of 2 *millions*. Out of this any reasonable man would expect that there would be a relief of taxation. But not a bit ! The projected Estimates show an increase of 2½ millions (1½ millions on Navy and ½ million on Civil Service). I have asked for a Cabinet, which is summoned for Thursday, to consider the Estimates as a whole. I intend to lay before them the financial situation and ask for a decision, which for me will be vital, on the question of whether this Government is to propose additional taxation with a surplus of 2 millions. I shall not do it—I think it is what the country cannot bear and ought not to be asked to bear. I hope nothing will happen to keep you away from this Cabinet.

" I had Spencer and C. Bannerman here to-day. The War Office has no Supplementary Estimates and no proposed increase for next year.

" I have offered to meet Spencer as far as my means will allow. Out of my realized surplus of this year I have offered him £300,000 in order to lighten next year's Estimate. I can afford him £1,200,000 next year as a maximum. That means that he should reduce his present claim of £770,000 by £250,000 for next year.

" From the impossibility of getting members of the Cabinet to London I have never succeeded in getting together a meeting of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet to deal

with the Navy Estimates. We have now fixed next Friday (the day after the Cabinet) for a meeting. I am glad to say that Spencer admits that the thing may probably be done, but he attaches (as I do) great importance to the assistance and advice of yourself and C. Bannerman.

"If we can get off £250,000 from their Estimates and £100,000 off the Civil Service I think we may, by the skin of our teeth, squeeze through, and even then the present Administration will have the unrivalled honour of having presented, in the space of 12 months, Estimates 6½ millions in excess of their immediate predecessors.

"I go home to-morrow for Sunday but shall be back in London early next week.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

My father worked very hard during the election campaign, and owing to his serious illness earlier in the year, suffered more than usual from over-fatigue. The reports of his diminished strength were probably greatly exaggerated in the newspapers, as this letter from him, in acknowledgment of a telegram of special inquiry about him from the Queen, indicates :

"Woodthorne,

"Wolverhampton,

"July 19th, 1895.

"DEAR SIR A. BIGGE,

"May I ask you to represent to Her Majesty my dutiful acknowledgment of her gracious kindness expressed in your telegram. The statements in the Press with regard to my health are greatly exaggerated. I was unexpectedly plunged into the toil and trouble of a contested Election. My medical adviser limited me to three speeches in a week, I was compelled to speak in crowded and heated meetings six times in four days, the natural result was that I was worn out with fatigue, and was obliged to stop. I have recruited very rapidly,

and I anticipate with the autumn rest a complete restoration to my former health.

"I should like to say to the Queen that, while I deplore the defeat of my own party, yet from a patriotic point of view I am glad that the Government will possess the element of strength which a large party majority confers, and which is of such vast importance not only in Home but especially in Foreign Affairs

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

Sir William Harcourt wrote again in August :

"Malwood,

"Lyndhurst,

"August 6th, 1895.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"Now that the question of the Speakership is settled—as I understand contrary to the wishes of Balfour—I suppose there will be no necessity to be in London before the 12th. I don't know what the form of the election will be, and whether he will be proposed from the Government side. I saw the authorized paragraph said that the election would 'not be opposed,' which may mean anything. I see that it is stated that the Address is to be taken on the 15th; of course it will be our cue to say as little as possible about anything. But I think we ought to be in our places on the 12th to do honour to Gully.

"Let me know what are likely to be your movements.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

"Malwood,

"Lyndhurst.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"It is now settled that Mowbray will propose Gully and John Ellis has been asked to second. When he takes

the Chair, Balfour and I shall congratulate. It is a good thing that there is to be no trouble about this business at starting.

"I shall now not come up to London till the morning of the 12th. We shall then have an opportunity of some talk on the future.

"We are well out of the confusion which I foresee impending. These torrents of rain will ruin the harvest, and it will be the worst year ever known for the farmers. I don't envy the Government the task they have undertaken of setting the agriculturalists on their legs; and in the winter they will have the unemployed on their hands. They accuse us of having promised more than we could perform, but they have won the election by holding out expectations which they can never satisfy.

"In the meanwhile the Revenue is miraculous. To-day the receipts are £3,000,000 above those of the corresponding period of last year (this allowing for Suez Canal and Miscellaneous is really £2,650,000). This is £1,000,000 in the first 4 months above my estimate of the excess for the whole year. The stamps alone show an increase of £1,850,000. I estimated an increase of £1,300,000 for the whole year.

"I estimated a decrease of £100,000 in Excise owing to the reduction of 6d. on spirits. There is already an increase of £268,000.

"I expect most of this will turn out to be gratuitous Election liquor.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

In October the Queen herself wrote again to my father :

"Balmoral Castle,

"October 5th, 1895.

"The Queen wishes to thank Sir Henry Fowler very sincerely for two letters.

"She hopes Sir Henry Fowler is really feeling strong again. We often think of his visits here, which were so pleasant and agreeable.

"Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg have sustained a great loss in the sudden death of the Prince's dear Mother, to whom the Princess was also very much attached, and whom they had only parted from in perfect health six weeks before."

In December he received the following letter from Sir William Harcourt, which indicated that the educational storm was brewing, though it did not actually break until a few years later :

"Malwood,

"Lyndhurst,

"December 10th, 1895.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I am very glad to receive your approval of my *Epistola contra London*. He is a clumsy controversialist and gave me a chance which was not to be missed. However, he was substantially re-echoed by Salisbury.

"Of course the real object of the Volunteers is to get out of volunteering, and if they can procure some more money grant, and get the standard lower, they will dispense with the subscription altogether.

"Weak as we are, I think we shall be able to choke this off.

"I am sure it will not do to fight the battle on the old ground of secularism—the sons of dogma are too many for us. All we can hope for is to prevent dogma being made the determining element in popular education.

"I think that, considering the fact that the requirements have been so much raised since 1870, and even 1876, there is a fair case for more assistance if there is sufficient money—which there is.

"I am all for fighting the battle as much as possible on the

educational field and as little as possible on the religious difficulty.

"What a blunderer the Bishop is to set all the school-masters against him by an attack on the salaries.

"I hope to hear from you before long on agricultural finance.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT.

"I enclose a letter of Ripon's, which is satisfactory, from our R. C. colleague. Please return it at once."

In January, 1896, a grave danger arose in the relations between England and the United States. For the greater part of the 19th century there had been a protracted dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela as to the boundaries between that country and British Guiana. Diplomacy seemed to have exhausted all its resources in trying to solve the problem where British Guiana ended and Venezuela began. The Foreign Office declared that up to a certain point, the British title was indisputable, but beyond that line it was doubtful, and so far as the doubtful territory was concerned, Great Britain was ready to leave the question to arbitration. The Venezuelans denied that Great Britain's title to any portion of the territory was indisputable, and contended the arbitration should include all the debatable land which either country claimed. The United States for some years had taken a growing interest in that dispute on the ground that it affected the Monroe Doctrine, to which they very rightly attached supreme importance. The President of the United States declared that if Great Britain's claim was unfounded, and if she maintained it by force, she would be increasing her dominions in South America by force; and as the whole dispute depended on the true historic boundary between Guiana and Venezuela, the question of that boundary should be referred to arbitration, and if Great Britain refused arbitration it would be the duty of the United States to interfere on behalf of Venezuela.

With regard to this dispute my father said :

"To attempt to settle a dispute between Great Britain and the United States by bloodshed, by the atrocity of such a war, would be a colossal crime against civilization, humanity and Christianity. We might say we did not desire an inch of territory beyond what we rightly possessed. Yes ; but the crux of the controversy was whether we had rightly possessed any part of the territory which was now in dispute. A great war between the two foremost nations of the world over an uninhabited fever-swamp, the value of which to either nation was infinitesimal, would be the hour and the power of all that opposed the cause of God and goodness. Great Britain was strong enough to say openly and frankly that we would do our utmost to ward off such an unspeakable calamity—that we were ready, without standing upon diplomatic punctilio, to recognize the feelings and even the prejudices of the American nation, and to meet them half-way in settling this unfortunate dispute." And in the same speech, which attracted considerable attention in the country, he not only gave his views with regard to arbitration, but also expressed himself as to the duty of the Opposition, of which he was so prominent a Member, at a time when the Government was confronted not only by the grave question of a dispute with the United States but with serious complications in South Africa and the Near East.

"The period which had elapsed," he continued, "since the Government acceded to Office, had been one of serious anxiety and enormous difficulty. They had been confronted with sudden and startling developments in foreign affairs, which were calculated to tax the resources of the most experienced statesmen. In crises like those which had recently occurred, the responsibility of Her Majesty's Opposition was only second to that of Her Majesty's Government. In the face of the common danger, the Opposition must support the Government of the Queen in presenting a united front ; and in every hostile interference with our national rights, or our national honour, subject to the pre-eminent obligations, the Opposition was bound to uphold those principles which in their judgment and conscience were the surest safe-guards of friendly relations with other powers."

After the speech Lord Rosebery wrote :

“ Mentmore,
 “ Leighton Buzzard,
 “ Boxing Day, 1896.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I understand that you are constantly moving up to London. If so, would it fall with your convenience to stay here on Wednesday the 30th? I should be glad for many reasons, of which I can furnish two.

“ 1. I shall soon be out of the way of communication.

“ 2. Kimberley will be here.

I consider myself precluded by the most obvious considerations from saying anything of your speech, except that it is devoutly to be wished that you spoke oftener. I wish that you represented a group of burghs like Campbell-Bannerman ; or the ‘ United Counties ’ in which the late Lord Advocate has to hold forth forty times a year. But, as that desire is not likely to be realized, I confine myself to the hope that all that the New Year can bring of health and happiness and success may come to you and yours.

“ Sincerely,
 “ R.”

The *Westminster Gazette* sent down a representative to Wolverhampton to interview my father on his declaration on arbitration made in that same speech. “ The moment,” wrote that representative afterwards, “ the subject was broached, Sir Henry Fowler burst out : ‘ Don’t talk of war between England and the United States. To admit it even as a possibility would be to assume that Christianity was an extinct force.’ ”

“ ‘ But things look rather ugly ? ’ ”

“ ‘ I don’t care how ugly they look. I do not believe that they will result in war. No, not even if, by some inconceivable access of folly, the two Governments were determined to fight. The nations would not ; of that I am certain. No one can have lived and moved and gone up and down in the midst of our people, without

knowing that deep down in their hearts there is an invincible determination to be friends, and not foes, with their kith and kin beyond the sea. We are all one family, and though we may often have family tiffs, even with the most quarrelsome, throat-cutting is ruled out, as an inconceivable method of settling a controversy. I have an unshaken faith, too, in the sterling common sense and good feeling of the American people, even of those who live as far west as the Pacific slope. No, the very suggestion of war is a horror. It would be the greatest crime that could be committed, the most suicidal folly that ever seized possession of a great race. Every blow we struck at them would hurt us as much as if it were struck at ourselves. If we destroy their commerce we, at the same time, destroy our own commerce, and every victory, on whichever side it was won, would be a defeat. If it could be, such a war would leave a festering wound which a whole century could not heal. It must not, it cannot be. That I am sure is the unspoken resolve of both nations.'

" ' But if there is to be no war, and if there is a difference of opinion between the two nations, what then ? '

" ' Then, of course, we must arbitrate,' said Sir Henry, ' that is plain enough. What have we been contending for during recent years but to substitute arbitration for war? The Americans have even been more urgent about this than ourselves. And do you think the two nations which have advocated arbitration, recommending it to all their neighbours on all occasions, and submitting loyally to adverse awards,—do you think that we are going to fall to and murder each other about this frontier dispute in South America ? '

" ' But the idea has gained ground in America that England is against arbitration.'

" ' Then England would be against civilization, against Christianity, against progress, against humanity.'

" ' Then would you be in favour of the establishment of a permanent tribunal of arbitration between the English-speaking races ? '

" ' Certainly, with all my heart.'

" ' Yet by some unfortunate misunderstanding, we are represented in the eyes of the Americans as being opposed to arbitration ? '

“ ‘Nonsense! Opposed to arbitration! What I take it is, that we have always been ready to go to arbitration even with Venezuela, provided that we could agree what territory was really and truly in dispute between us. Of course there was the difficulty of arriving at the preliminary agreement necessary for reference to arbitration. But the principle of arbitration has never been repudiated by us as between Venezuela and Great Britain. The question of applying arbitration to the dispute between the United States and Great Britain has never, so far as I know, been formally raised.’

“ ‘Then what would you regard as the question in dispute between England and the United States? The Monroe doctrine?’

“ ‘No,’ replied Sir Henry Fowler, ‘I am very heartily in sympathy with the Monroe doctrine, reasonably interpreted. What does it mean, to put it shortly? It means this. That the Western Sphere is not to be made the happy hunting-ground of military expeditions. I have the greatest sympathy with the American desire to put a peremptory veto once and for all upon all such filibustering as the Mexican Expedition. Is it not worth their while to be able to get their standing army down to twenty-five thousand men? Assuredly it is, but what they fail to see is that we are almost as interested as they are in upholding the Munroe doctrine. Why on earth any man in America could wish to quarrel with the only nation whose interests are identical with its own, and which is as anxious to restrict the area of territory over which militarism casts its deadly shade, is one of those things we do not understand. It is true that upon our shoulders there has been thrown the very arduous and costly burden of maintaining the peace of the seas, and of enforcing law and maintaining peace in our great Empire; and in view of our Imperial responsibilities our armaments cannot be said to be larger in proportion than those of the United States. I see no difficulty in coming to a peaceable and friendly understanding with the United States, but I see the greatest danger arising from the prolongation of the present inflammatory dispute. There is a dispute about which both sides agree there must be arbitration. There is a further dispute as to which one side says its rights are so clear that they

are not fit subjects for arbitration. But if this is denied, the question can be decided without the slaughter and desolation of civil war.'

" 'Do you think if we could get the great question raised, the minor frontier squabble would shrink into its proper insignificance?'

" 'It is a grave question,' said Sir Henry; 'I am not sure whether we had not better settle the frontier difficulty first, and then show that we have profited by the melancholy result of allowing such a controversy to spring up, without having any tribunal competent to decide it, by proceeding with a good grace and clean hands, to establish some permanent system of arbitration, which ought to be the next step.' "

This interview was of course published, and Sir William Harcourt wrote the two following letters concerning it :

" Malwood,

" Lyndhurst,

" January 19th, 1896.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I was very glad to see your declaration in favour of arbitration with America last Saturday. I called the attention of Lansdowne to it, whom I met in the train as I was going down to Nuneham. He is all for peace. I have been writing in the same direction at Chatsworth, where I spent last week. I found the Duke in a very satisfactory state of mind. I also talked to A. Balfour, who was more reserved, but I thought his Manchester speech good as far as it went.

" I gather that the great majority of the Cabinet are for accommodation. I fancy Joe will be the difficulty. The great thing is to impress on their minds :

" (1) The reality of the danger.

" (2) That arbitration is the only possible solution, and that all other plans will fail.

" My view is that when our case is published, and the American Commission has reported, it will appear that the

whole thing is involved in so much doubt that the case for arbitration will be irresistible. The worst of it is that, as I learn, our case is not prepared, and may not be ready even when Parliament meets.

"The fact is that the Government are only just beginning to examine it, and the Salisbury despatches were written slapdash with very little real knowledge of the facts, which, I am convinced, will turn out much less in our favour than is supposed.

"Anyhow the Schomburk line as an irreducible minimum is incapable of being supported.

"I do not know if you have seen E. Fitzmaurice's letter to Lefevre, stating expressly that in 1885 he had agreed with the Venezuelans, and Article in this Treaty, for arbitration generally of all questions including boundary, and that this was cancelled by the short Salisbury Government in 1885.

"What we did 1892-1895 in the matter I do not know, as my attention was never directed to this matter. But that signifies very little. The question is quite too serious for party distinctions—and if we have been in the wrong we must admit it.

"I have taken a house, 6, Buckingham Gate, and shall settle in Town at the end of this month.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

"Malwood,

"Lyndhurst,

"January 23rd, 1896.

"Confidential.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I am glad to find that we are agreed (as I knew we should be) on the American question, which is far the most important matter now at issue. I have worked hard in private with Ministers to bring about arbitration, which is the only possible solution. I have said nothing in public for fear of increasing their difficulties, but I am now glad

to know that (what is indeed admitted in the *Times*) the Schomburk line of irreducible minimum is abandoned, and that confidential communications are in progress with a view of setting up arbitration again. There is, therefore, not the same need for reserve, and when you speak I think you would do well to declare frankly for arbitration. It is what the U. S. have asked for, and what the English people approve, and what, in the end, both Governments must adopt. I understand that our people are now sticking for a sort of *status in quo*—i.e., to exclude from arbitration any territory now settled. I do not believe that the U. S. will agree to this, and if we are to go to arbitration there is no use fighting small points. I am for arbitration '*pur et simple, sans phrase*.'

"I thought Lansdowne's speech on the American situation good as far as it went, and as much as he was in a position to say.

"I have a good house—6, Buckingham Gate, where I shall be able to read you the Queen's Speech on the 10th.

"In the beginning I think there will be plenty to say and little to do.

"The Government I think may spend their millions with less disadvantage on the Navy than on many of the other objects which they are supposed to contemplate. I should not be much disinclined to make them a present of the old Sinking Fund for this single year, as twelve millions is more than we could fairly demand should be devoted to debt in one year. I have always regarded the Sinking Fund as maintained in periods of tranquillity as a reserve in emergencies. I should myself be satisfied if we could secure the permanent maintenance of the Terminable Annuities and the New Sinking Fund, which amounts to about seven millions, and is about as much as we are bound to do for our successors. If we are too stiff we shall lose the whole.

"Hicks Beach will not be able to count on anything like the income next year which he has got this year. His disposable surplus, after he has satisfied the Services (and we shall have to grant whatever they ask), will be small enough

to resuscitate agriculture and fill the maw of the Volunteers.

"I am truly sorry for the Queen in her old age ; and the poor Princess, a kind and motherly woman, very homelike and fond of her family,

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

Early the following year, 1896, my father expressed some of his views on the then, as now, vexed and difficult question of Capital and Labour. He held that there was an absolute identity of interest between the two—that the one was inseparable from the other. "Manufacturers cannot carry on business except by a combination of those two great factors, and nothing can be more suicidal, or entail more miserable results, than strife between these elements. We must apply to them the principle of mutual obligation, mutual concession, mutual recognition of each other's rights and liabilities. There cannot in this conflict be conquest. Remember that capital can never conquer labour, and labour can never conquer capital. The two together produce the product of the manufacturer. The difficulty arises as to the respective share of the product. There is no real severance of interest. We talk about interest upon capital, and about the wages of labour, but the interest of capital is the wages of capital, and the wages of labour is the interest of the capital of the labourer. The labouring man has no capital but his labour, and he is entitled to bring his labour into the best market. The effect of a conflict between capital and labour is of enormous injury to both sides, and to the best interest of the country. These two fiscal powers must refer their disputes to arbitration."

In reviewing the situation after the General Election, Henry Fowler gave utterance to a truth which is as apt now, as it was then, to be disregarded or overlooked ; but it was one which was very deeply rooted in his personal opinions, and would always have steered his policy had he been called to a leadership which, for a combination of reasons, passed him by.

"Though he could not explain away the crushing fact that the majority of the electors and of the constituencies had deter-

mined that the Government of this country should be placed in the hands of the Conservative party, he did not believe that the Liberal party was in a permanent minority in the country. The high tide, like all other high tides, would turn, and he thought there was already a subsidence of the waters. While, however, he agreed with Mr. George Russell, that the time for mourning in the Liberal party was passed, he thought there were two lessons which the election illustrated and emphasized, and which the Liberal party, and perhaps the Conservative party, should not disregard. The first was that in the country, as in all countries where the Government rested on a popular basis, we could not legislate in advance of public opinion. No matter how desirable, how wise, how necessary any specific legislation might be, it must spring from and rely upon the deliberate judgment of the majority before it could be placed in the Statute Book. The strongest force in a free country was public opinion, and the secret of the success of the great reforms of the present century was, that they were inspired and enforced by the invincible strength of the national will. The abolition of slavery, the reform of Parliament, the repeal of the Corn Laws, the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the extension of the Franchise, were but among the many instances of the soundness of that principle. The other lesson of the election was the danger to party government, and to constitutional Governments, of the system of groups. Lord Beaconsfield once said, party government meant parliamentary government, and the experience of other nations had proved the accuracy of that assertion. The strength, the safety of party government depended on the unity, force and loyalty of the parties who, from time to time, composed the Government and the Opposition. In France they had reduced the group system to a science, and the result had been that in the twenty-five years that had elapsed since the Republic was established, they had had upwards of thirty Cabinets. During a long reign of sixty years, the Queen had had only ten Prime Ministers. Under our party system, where each party practically represented nearly half the nation, we preserved the responsibility alike of the past and the future. We secured a fair consideration of the varying proposals and interests of all

classes, and obtained that combination of caution and courage which was the essential of wide, safe and progressive legislation. A party, as a whole, instinctively appreciated the practicability of the proportionate prominence of the proposals which were more or less strongly urged, and by the application of common sense to times and to seasons, as well as by the indication of public opinion, it gathered and consolidated the forces by which all great reforms were carried. The story of the triumph of the Liberal party on the battle-field of religious, civil and commercial freedom was the record of the wisdom and success of this policy."

And again a few months later he said on the same subject: "Liberal leaders may go, the Liberal party may go—but Liberal principles remain. They are indestructible; they have survived many a conflict, many a mutiny, many a disaster, many a defeat. Nearly forty years ago Sir George Cornewall Lewis said that he considered the Liberal party to be extinct. It is of historic interest that at that time not the least of the difficulties of the Liberal party was that it had two leaders. Those two distinguished Liberal statesmen had both been Prime Ministers; they had both, by their brilliant services and surpassing abilities, proved themselves worthy of the foremost place in the great party, which was very evenly divided as to their respective merits. Lord John Russell had dismissed Lord Palmerston from the great office of Foreign Secretary, which he had held for fourteen years. Lord Palmerston describes his retort for this abrupt dismissal in a single sentence, 'I have had my tit for tat with John Russell, and I turned him out on Friday.' Years after that, Lord John joined in the combination which defeated Lord Palmerston, and compelled him to dissolve, and, later, in the fatal attack which forced him to resign. If in those days there had been London correspondents, or a periodical devoted to the weekly circulation of truth, what authentic stories, what confidential revelations would have mystified and amused and informed the public!

"Under circumstances like these and in the midst of party dissensions, so acute a statesman as Sir George Cornewall Lewis was of opinion that the Liberal party was extinct, and the *Times* said that the Liberal party had died of disunion and decay. In

less than a year at a General Election the extinct party, the party which was dead, was alive, reunited, powerful and victorious. Since that date it has won some of its most brilliant victories, and placed on the Statute Book some of its greatest legislation; and the Liberal party of to-day is 'perplexed, but not in despair, cast down, but not destroyed.' The weapon has yet to be forged which can strike a fatal blow against those principles which will live and flourish as long as freedom and progress are the watch-words of the English people. I know that to-day, as it was in the past, as it will be in the future, we have internal difficulties. The party of progress must always include those who advance slowly and those who advance rapidly. The true combination of caution and courage which deserves success, can only be secured by reasoning with and convincing the party as a whole. The evolution of Liberalism, which has been a feature of the glory of the past seventy years, has not been accomplished by forced surrender of conscientious convictions and yielding to threats of desertion. Your money or your life, may be a powerful argument, but this is the argument of the highwayman, not of the statesman. The Liberal victories of the past were won by reason, by argument, by proving the wisdom, the safety, and the necessity of proposed reforms. The minority—and all great causes are the children of minorities—convinced the party, and the conviction of the party, when sanctioned by the majority of the electorate, was not only resistless but irreversible. The policy of the Liberals has been described as a policy of destruction. Yes, we have destroyed a great deal; we have demolished many abuses, which I don't think our opponents would wish to see restored. Our work in that department is not yet done. Some crying evils have yet to be destroyed; some curses, which blight and blast our national life, have yet to be swept away. But the Liberal policy is not only one of destruction. Rest and be thankful, is not the motto of the Liberal party. We have a great constructive work to do; we have to translate into action our belief that the primary need of the nation is legislation and administration for improving, in the broadest sense of the phrase, the condition of the people in all its ramifications; house and home, health and work and wages,

of education, and recreation, in childhood and old age. We have to realize the truth of the memorable sentence, 'The nation in every country dwells in the cottage.' Unless the light of your constitution can shine there, unless the beauty of your legislation and the excellence of your statesmanship are impressed there, on the feelings and condition of the people, rely upon it you have yet to learn the duties of Government."

In January, 1896, my father was much shocked by the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg, whom he had known well during his visits to Balmoral. He wrote the following letter of sympathy to the Queen :

" Sir Henry Fowler presents his humble duty to your Majesty, with the request that he may be allowed to tender his heartfelt sympathy in the great sorrow which has so sadly and suddenly fallen upon your Majesty and the Princess Beatrice.

" The association with Prince Henry, which Sir Henry Fowler had the honour of enjoying at Balmoral, has left on his mind a lasting impression of the manly simplicity, the unaffected kindness, the strong common sense, and the singularly accurate appreciation of the difficulties and duties of his position, which pre-eminently distinguished the lamented Prince.

" He has sacrificed his life in the service of his Queen and country, and the nation, which has always shared in Your Majesty's joys and sorrows, recognizes and mourns the loss it has sustained.

" Sir Henry Fowler joins in the prayer that Your Majesty, and your widowed daughter and orphan grandchildren, may be divinely sustained and comforted in this terrible bereavement."

His letter was first acknowledged by Sir Arthur Bigge (now Lord Stamfordham) :

" Osborne,

" January 26th, 1896.

" MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

" I have given the Queen your letter received this morning and Her Majesty desires me to thank you sincerely for your kind sympathy in this moment of deep affliction. Her Majesty will write herself later on. Far from regarding it

as an intrusion the Queen was gratified to hear from you. Indeed it is a sad calamity.

"I am thankful to say that Her Majesty and the poor Princess are in good health. Her Royal Highness is of course broken with grief, but is most brave.

"Yours very truly,

"ARTHUR BIGGE."

And a few months later the Queen wrote to him herself :

"Osborne,

"June 21st, 1896.

"The Queen thanks Sir Henry Fowler most truly for his very kind and feeling letter. His true appreciation of her beloved son, who was a son to her, gratifies her darling and deeply-afflicted child and herself very much, as does the unusual sympathy of the nation.

"The Queen may say with truth that the sunshine has gone out of her home, for her dear son was so bright and cheerful and so helpful.

"Her dear bereaved daughter, who was such a devoted happy wife, is quite wonderful in her courage and resignation and submission to God's Will, but she is broken-hearted."

In 1896 the Report of the Commission on Irish Finance was published and enjoyed the attention of the leaders of the Liberal party. The following letters are typical of the correspondence in which my father took part, as an authority on financial questions.

"Malwood,

"Lyndhurst,

"November 16th, 1896.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I have been for some time meditating a letter to you on the subject which will have to occupy our very serious attention. I refer to the Report of the Irish Financial Relations. I have been studying this unpleasant document very

carefully. Its net result is that the taxation of Ireland is 1-12th that of the U. K. and that its taxable capacity is 1-20th, and that therefore Ireland is entitled, in meal or in malt, to a remission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions or thereabouts which we have somehow or other to find.

"This is practically the unanimous Report of the Commission, including Childers, Welby, Farrer and Bertram Currie.

"Once granted that Ireland is to be treated as a 'separate entity' for purposes of taxation, and I see no possibility of resisting their conclusions.

"It is obvious that the 'separate entity' theory is equally applicable to any other poor district of the U. K., say the East End of London, but I fear the position of the unity of areas for taxation has been fatally given away. It was abandoned by Goschen in 1890, when he granted his Committee in 1890 (see his speeches, May 20, 1890, and April 14th, 1890). It was laid down in the reference to this Committee that Ireland was to be regarded as a separate unit for the purpose of taxation, and indeed it cannot be denied that this was an express covenant in the Act of Union (Art. 7) (See Farrar and Welby's report, p. 39).

"But granted that Ireland is shown to be entitled to a remission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions, how is it to be given? No one would think of giving up the Income Tax or Stamps. The great evil of Irish taxation is that four-fifths of the taxation is levied on commodities, tea, coffee, spirits, *i.e.*, of the poorer classes. The only thing which could be of any use would be to take off the whole duty on whisky, and that I do not believe even the Irish would desire, and if they did, it involves a customs barrier.

"So far from Ireland contributing to the Joint Imperial Fund the 2 millions we secured in our Home Rule Bill, the readjusted Irish taxation would not cover the present expenditure on Ireland by a million. So much for the Unionist denunciation of our financial profligacy in 1893.

"I do not think the counter argument of excess of expenditure can as a set-off be maintained. We pledged ourselves

at the Union that Ireland should not be burdened beyond her taxable capacity and it is no answer that our administration of Ireland is so costly that we cannot afford to treat her fairly.

" I should be very glad to know how the report has impressed you. I am heartily glad that it does not fall to me either to resist or to carry out its conclusions.

" There is another matter on which I should be glad to have your opinions. The Executive of the Federation are pressing me to allow myself to be announced as the speaker at their Annual Meeting in March. I am not at all disposed to accept the office. They are not able to say what is the programme which they will propound, nor what is the relation in which the Federation is to stand to the Whip's Office and the Front Bench.

" We discussed this a good deal *à propos* of the Maden correspondence in the spring. The principle then advanced was, that the Federation was wholly independent, and that neither body was to influence the other. But if we on the Front Bench go (as at Newcastle) to bless and endorse all the Articles of the Federation Creed either we must dictate the programme or accept it from them.

" From their point of view it seems to me that they should go their own way and leave us to judge as to ours.

" Pray tell me what you think of this.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. V. HARCOURT."

To which my father replied :

" November 23rd, 1896.

" MY DEAR HARCOURT,

" I had most carefully considered the report of the Financial Relations Commission before I received your letter of the 16th. I have again considered the whole question. I cannot admit the correctness of the statement at page 39 of the Farrer, Welby and Currie report, to which you refer. The main crux of the whole question is whether Ireland is a separate entity for financial purposes. Farrer, Welby and Currie say that this theory ' has the greatest support in

history.' It seems to me that the exact contrary is the case. It cannot be denied that the Union contemplated a financial amalgamation—that it prevented the contingencies, upon the happening of which the amalgamation was to be effected—that the two Exchequers were consolidated in 1817, and that the policy then adopted is the policy which has regulated our financial relations for the last 80 years

"The speeches of Pitt and Castlereagh prove beyond doubt that their object was the union of the two Exchequers. When Pitt explained his scheme as to proportionate contribution, he expressed the hope that the system of internal taxation in each country might gradually be so equalized and assimilated, as to make all rules as to specific proportion unnecessary; and Castlereagh, while admitting that the disproportion of the debts of the two countries required that their debts should be kept distinct and that their taxation should therefore be separate and proportionate, anticipated a common treasury in the future, and declared that by no system whatever could the two Kingdoms be made to contribute so strictly according to their respective means as by being subject to the same taxes equally bearing upon the great objects of taxation in both countries.

"The 7th article of the Union provides that when the debts are in the same proportions as their contributions (15 to 2) Parliament might consolidate the separate Exchequers, and defray the expenditure of the United Kingdom by equal taxes imposed on the same articles in each country. In 1811 the debts had very nearly reached the specified proportions and a Committee of the House of Commons called special attention to the question of financial amalgamation. After a re-appointment in 1812, the Committee in 1815 reported very strongly in favour of amalgamation. In 1816, the House passed the necessary resolutions and the Consolidation Act was passed in the same Session. Whether the arrangement was favourable to Ireland (I think it was) or not, it terminated as a matter of fact, and a matter of law, the theory that Great Britain and Ireland were separate entities

with separate revenues. When O'Connell attacked the Union he endeavoured to show that Ireland had lost, and England had gained, but I do not see how this, or any other contention of O'Connell, constitutes evidence that his views are historical proofs in favour of the justice of his allegations. When it was proposed in 1853 to extend the income-tax to Ireland, every Irish Member raised the question of the relative capacity of Ireland as affecting her taxation. Mr. Gladstone ridiculed the contention—denied the necessity for any inquiry and affirmed the matter was as clear as daylight. Cobden, who stoutly defended the principle that the taxes that are paid in Great Britain must be paid in Ireland, told the Irish Members that 'if a dissolution were to take place on the question of the equalization of taxes, although Ireland would be disposed to avoid taxation if possible, the thing would be settled without them.' In 1863, when a motion was made for a Committee to inquire into the depressed conditions of Ireland and the effects of her taxation, Mr. Gladstone maintained that in Ireland's own interest, fiscal equality was the end to be kept in view, and he defended the equity and liberality of the system established by the consolidation of the two Exchequers. In 1869 a Committee was appointed to inquire into the taxation of Ireland and as to whether it was in accordance with the Act of Union. That Committee, which included two subsequent Chancellors of the Exchequer (Northcote and Lowe), sat for two years, and while reporting that the depression in Ireland had not been occasioned by the pressure of taxation, they stated that if the principle of graduation in favour of Ireland was accepted, it would be in part at the expense of adding to the burdens of the poor districts in Great Britain, and that if it was to be allowed as regarded different parts of the United Kingdom, it would have to be allowed as regards individual taxpayers. The question was once more raised in 1875, and then Northcote maintained the impossibility of separately considering different parts of the United Kingdom, and Lowe asserted that the Irish argument rested on an obvious fallacy—that taxation was not

paid by geographical districts but by individuals, and that to establish a case it must be shown that the individual Irishman was more heavily taxed than the individual Englishman in similar circumstances.

"The Home Rule controversy of course raised the separate entity theory as to finance and other points. The dates and facts I have alleged show the inaccuracy of the allegation, that the separate entity theory has the support of history. It is in direct contradiction of the terms of the Union—of the policy and practice of eighty years, and of the opinions of financiers, including Gladstone, Lowe and Northcote.

"You refer to Goschen's speech in 1890 as giving away the position of unity of areas; I think that if you consider the circumstances of the debate, and the wording of the speech, you will see that he can (as I have no doubt he will) repudiate this construction—that he will say that he granted the Committee in order that the absurdity of the Irish position might appear, and that neither he, nor the Unionist party, will ever consent to such a dislocation of Imperial Finance as the proposed separation (so long as there is an United Kingdom) would involve.

"Anyhow, we are not bound by any financial opinions of Goschen's. You have pulverized a good many, and it is impossible to justify one of the gravest alterations in our National Finance by the isolated opinion of any Chancellor of the Exchequer, which would, in this case, be undoubtedly repudiated by every other member of the Unionist Cabinet.

"But apart from all this, the advocates of the separate theory must face what it involves. The argument cannot be limited to income, it must extend to expenditure.

"Take the figures as you quote them, that Ireland's capacity is 1-20th and that her taxation is 1-12th, what does she contribute to Imperial expenditure? I know the argument about excessive expenditure, but deduct any reasonable diminution of that expenditure which a Nationalist Government could effect, and you cannot bring Ireland's contribution to the debt, to the Army and Navy, and to the Imperial

expenditure to 1-20th of the cost. The contention of Sexton that she gains nothing by our Army and Navy is not tenable. Her separate existence, except by moral and military expenditure raised by herself which would crush her, is impossible. If we did not hold Ireland, some other great Power would, and what would her taxation be then? Mr. Gladstone in 1886 put her share of the debt at £48,000,000, and he calculated the interest at £1,466,000, and sinking fund at £360,000; this was modified twice in 1893, but take her share of the debt now as 1-20th of £630,000,000, or £31,500,000, and her contribution at 1-20th of the £25,000,000 annual charge for interest and sinking fund, or £1,250,000, and what would that leave on existing figures for her contributions to Military, Naval and Civil expenditure? Not £850,000! On the entity theory her share of all Imperial and debt expenditure is at least £3,000,000.

"But if this principle of capacity of districts is to prevail where is it to stop? The poverty of the Highlands and of many rural districts in England—the slums of London and our large towns—will want to know why their areas are not to have the benefit of this graduation.

"If relief is to be given in respect of taxes on consumable articles, why is the artisan of Belfast to have his whisky cheaper than the artisan of Glasgow and Newcastle? Why is the poor housekeeper of Dublin and Cork to have cheaper tea than the poor housekeeper of London and Liverpool? If the relief is to be on direct taxation why are the professional, commercial and land-owning classes of Ireland to be relieved from the taxes paid by the same classes in Great Britain? And this relief to be given by increased taxation of the people of Great Britain!

"Is there any Chancellor of the Exchequer who dare propose such taxation? Could any Government or any party survive such a policy?

"I cannot finish this extravagantly long letter without a word on the personnel of the Commission. The signatories to the report comprise 7 pronounced Home Rulers, 1 Unionist,

2 Irish Members (both, I believe, Unionists, but both interested in the reduction of Irish taxation), 2 gentlemen, Messrs. Martin and Slattery, whose politics I do not know, and 1 (only 1) public man of the first rank who may be called independent and judicial. Farrer, Welby and Currie's reports are on the Home Rule basis, and are in defence of its principles and policy. They even, in paragraph 52, carelessly describe the reference in an unusual way. They speak of the separate theory as 'the one upon which our instructions are founded!' But even Welby cannot keep up to the pace of Farrer, and he is obliged to record his dissent from the astounding proposal that Ireland should be exempted from any contribution to the National Debt, Army and Navy. Sir Thomas Sutherland of course takes, and as a man of business, defends the Unionist point of view. But the ablest of all the reports is that of Sir D. Barbour. He, I believe, is an Irishman, but he has spent his life in India. After a distinguished financial career in all the branches of the Indian Service, he reached, in 1887, the high position of Financial Secretary to the Government of India, and in 1888 he was made the Chancellor of the Indian Exchequer and therefore a Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet. He held this post for five years.

"He possesses every qualification for an impartial and competent examination of this whole question—his judgment is clear, and, as I venture to think, unanswerable; and to it I adhere.

"I do hope that you will not in any way give the sanction of your great authority to a policy which I believe to be unsound and unworkable, and to which I do not think the Parliament or the people of Great Britain will consent.

"I owe you an abject apology for the enormous length of this letter—it does not express either all my criticisms on, and objections to, the Report of the Commission, but I dare not waste another minute of your time. I will try and reply to the rest of your letter by next post.

"Yours very sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

" Malwood,

" Lyndhurst,

" March 9th, 1896.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I was very grateful to you for your long and very instructive letter on Irish Finance. I have been 'strictly meditating that thankless muse' not, I am sorry to say, with satisfactory results.

" I need not tell you how most financial consciences would desire to reach the same conclusions at which you arrive.

" The whole question is whether the Treaty of Union did stipulate separate consideration of the taxation of Ireland, then and thereafter, on the basis of her relative taxable resources, or whether Ireland brought herself into hotchpot.

" On the best consideration I can give to the matter, as revealed in this inquiry, the almost unanimous verdict of the Commission that Ireland is entitled to separate consideration cannot be gainsaid

" I send you a Memorandum which I have drawn up—which please return to me if you have time to read it.

" You will see, I think, that Barbour, for whom you vouch, is on the main point a 'separatist.'

" What a mess the Government have got into on the Egyptian £500,000 !

" Yours sincerely,

" W. V. HARCOURT."

" Malwood, Lyndhurst,

" December 9th, 1896.

" DEAR FOWLER,

" Returning to the everlasting and unpleasant subject of Irish Financial relations I trouble you with another bundle of notes. We have to encounter not only the overwhelming numbers of the Commission, but, what is still more serious, the admissions made by E. Hamilton, speaking on behalf of the Treasury. Of course, the positions we should have liked to take up and on which the *status quo* is alone defensible are :

" (1). That consequent on the Union and upon the

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amalgamation of the Exchequers, an indiscriminate system of taxation was finally established between the two countries and cannot now be re-viewed or re-opened.

"(2). That a system of indiscriminate taxation operates equally between the two countries.

"(3). That the finance since the Union has in fact operated fairly between Great Britain and Ireland in regard to taxation.

"I think that you must agree with me that the passages I have extracted from E. Hamilton's answers to Sexton's cross-examination give away all these positions and negative all the propositions above stated. Even the 'fidus Achates' finds himself compelled to condemn the financial policy of Mr. G. in 1853.

"Pray return me the enclosed papers when you have had time to look at them.

"They seem to me very serious.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

"57, Elm Park Gardens,

"South Kensington, S.W.

"December 30th, 1896.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I am particularly glad that you come on the 5th.

"Like you, I am worrying away at the riddle which my friend, the Irish Sphinx, has now set us. It abounds in traps and *culs de sac*. Among others, will our Irish friends undertake to govern their own country on such a sum as 1-20th would yield, even if we let them off with one million as their contribution to imperial charges of debt and defence?

"But I shall like beyond all other things a quiet hour with you. Fix your own time.

"Yours very sincerely,

"JOHN MORLEY.

"Private.—Mr. G. thinks that the plan of handing over the whisky duty to joint local authorities 'deserves very careful consideration.'"

The foreign policy of Europe was at this time complicated by a difference of opinion concerning the Armenian atrocities. It was the instinct of the religious party in England to cry out that this brutality, and bloodshed, and terrible persecution must be put a stop to at all costs ; and to advocate the intervention of England as the protector of the oppressed, and the champion of religious freedom. So cried impulse—good impulse in its motive, and its meaning, and its resolve—but the foreign policy of the Powers of Europe cannot be guided by impulse. Let impulse have had its head at that critical moment, and England would have been involved in the far wider horrors of a great European war. The Liberal party was divided in its opinions ; there were those who, like Lord Rosebery and my father, knew that to steer safely the Ship of State was to act only in concert with the other Powers ; there were those who wanted England to rush full tilt into a single-handed intervention, and run the risk of whatever might follow. Owing to this division in the party and the feeling expressed by one side against the policy of Lord Rosebery, he resigned the leadership of the Liberal party. In September he wrote to my father :

“ Dalmeny Park,
“ Edinburgh,
“ September 18th, 1896.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Where are you ? I should greatly like to hold communication with you. Would you come here on the 8th for our political function on the 9th ?

“ A great responsibility rests on those who are hounding on the country to a European war. But they will not succeed.

“ Yours sincerely,
“ R.”

And again on October 7th :

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I hope that this will reach you before to-morrow’s paper, which will announce to you the reasons, or some of

them, for my resigning the leadership of the Liberal party.

"As you are coming here, I wish you to know from myself, that I have taken this step, for which our conversation at St. Andrews may, I hope, have prepared you.

"Yours sincerely,
"R."

Later in the year my father spoke on this subject. I give his views in his own words :

"A question of vast importance has occupied public attention during the last few months, upon which there have been the differences of opinion in the Liberal party, which have led to the retirement from its leadership of Lord Rosebery. The infernal cruelties of the Turkish Government in Armenia have righteously aroused the indignation of all classes and all parties in this country, but the saddest part of this terrible story is that it is the result of British statesmanship and British public opinion. The pro-Turkish and anti-Russian policy, popular at the time, which caused the Crimean war, and which tore up the Treaty of San Stefano, is responsible for the continuance of a Government, which has made one of the fairest provinces in the East what Lord Rosebery described as an organized hell. The Prime Minister the other day denounced the belief in the necessary antagonism between this country and Russia, as the superstition of an antiquated diplomacy. The superstition may be as dead as the diplomacy, but the evil that nations, as well as men, do lives after them ; the policy which was founded upon that antiquated diplomacy is the source of the crimes which have horrified the civilized world. But in 1896 we have to deal with the facts with which we are faced. We must ask ourselves what are our obligations, what are our responsibilities, what can we do, and within what limit must our efforts be confined ? It has been urged that we are bound by treaty to protect the inhabitants of Armenia from Turkish oppression, but this must be tested by the daylight of evidence. I think it will be admitted that the only instrument that can be quoted as authorizing the contention, that any duty

of interference between Turkey and her subjects is imposed upon Great Britain is the Cyprus Convention ”

He then proceeded to explain that Convention, and to show that the obligation which Great Britain was under was to join the Sultan in defending his Asiatic dominions, if they were invaded by Russia. In return, the Sultan promised to England to introduce necessary reforms into the Government, and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Sultan in Asia. Therefore our defence of Turkey was conditional upon her reform. “ There is no evidence of any right conferred on or any obligation undertaken by England, to coerce Turkey in respect of her internal Government. I deny that we were under a covenant or any treaty obligation to compel Turkey by force to reform her Government in Armenia. Turkey has broken her promise to us. We are free from our promise to her. The defensive alliance is at an end, and not one shilling of English money will be spent, not one drop of English blood will ever be shed, to protect the detestable Government which for centuries has cursed the unhappy creatures subject to its sway. The policy of Lord Aberdeen’s Government and Lord Beaconsfield’s Government prolonged the existence of the Turkish Empire, and that policy has fixed on Great Britain a moral responsibility in respect of misrule in Turkey, which rests upon no other European nation. We are bound to do all that we can to terminate the horrors which the Sultan has inflicted, and is inflicting, upon thousands of his subjects, whose only crime is the profession of the Christian faith. There are two courses open to us. Joint action with the other Powers—separate action by ourselves. Any interference with the Sultan as a sovereign, or with Turkey as a state, raises the most difficult and dangerous of all the problems of European diplomacy. The Eastern question affects the interests of every one of those six great Powers, and they would claim, and justly claim, an effective voice in its settlement. These Powers may arrive at a peaceful settlement, or it may be that a peaceful settlement is impossible ; but one thing is certain, that the separate interference of any one Power would provoke the resistance of the others, and precipitate the carnage of a European war. It is easy to deride the Concert of Europe, but the conflict of Europe

would be the most awful calamity which the history of Europe, or the world, has ever recorded. The controversy upon which the Liberal party has differed may be stated in two sentences: Lord Rosebery's opponents maintain that, failing decisive action by the Powers of Europe, a united England should press upon Lord Salisbury the duty of intervening by force. Lord Rosebery said: 'The cardinal point of my policy is that single-handed interference means a European war,' and he stated his belief, founded upon information and knowledge, that there was a fixed and resolute agreement on the part of nearly all the great Powers to resist by force any single-handed intervention of England in the affairs of the East. That statement of unparalleled gravity has never been contradicted. . . . When a man, holding a blazing torch from which the sparks are flying, asks me to walk with him through a magazine where the gunpowder is lying everywhere exposed, and assures me that there is not a particle of truth in the assumption that an explosion will follow from such a promenade, I am amazed at his delusions, but do not sacrifice my life to demonstrate the danger. I for one will resolutely oppose Great Britain's taking any step which will kindle a conflagration, the extent, the miseries, the consequences of which, no man can calculate. I deplore the inaction of Europe, I feel, as every Englishman must feel, when he sees these gigantic crimes recklessly and unreservedly committed in the face of the great Powers, who could, if they chose, terminate the awful tragedy; but I remember the words of John Bright, who, after expressing his sympathy with the cruelly-oppressed peoples of Europe, said: 'It is not on a question of sympathy that I dare involve this country in a war which must cost an incalculable amount of treasure and of blood; it is not my duty to make this country the knight-errant of the human race, and take upon herself the protection of the thousand millions of human beings who have been permitted by the Creator of all things to people this planet.' Lord Rosebery, believing, as he said, that he was in difference with a considerable mass on the Eastern question, arrived at the conclusion that he could not honourably continue in his position as our leader. I unreservedly deplore that decision. I believe that the majority of the party share Lord

Rosebery's opinions and approve his policy ; but every man is the judge of his own honour. For Lord Rosebery I entertain the strongest feelings of admiration and affection , and I think his party, and his country, will never forget the statesmanlike courage with which, at a supremely critical moment, he placed patriotism above party popularity, and dared to proclaim the dangers of a policy which, however noble were its aims and however Christian its motive, was rapidly rushing to a terrible catastrophe."

The following day Sir William Harcourt wrote :

" Malwood,

" Lyndhurst,

" December 12th, 1896.

" DEAR FOWLER,

" I thank you for your note. Allow me to congratulate you on the very excellent and spirited speech which I have just read and to thank you for the kind way in which you spoke of your humble servant.

" The cheerful and encouraging tone of your speech will give life and hope to the party. There is nothing so foolish as the temper of those who think that when it is bad weather it will never be fine again, and that in sunshine we shall never experience showers. You and I have seen too much of life not to have implicit confidence in the vicissitudes of the seasons, of which yesterday and to-day we have a capital example.

" E. Hamilton comes here to-day and we shall have a lively Sabbath on Irish Finance, of which I will let you know the outcome.

" No doubt the real object is to try to frighten the Government into getting rid of the Committee—but in that they will not succeed. I do not believe a word of the story of our Joe's complicity.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. V. HARCOURT."

The encouraging tone of the speech referred to was an unusual burst of optimism on my father's part concerning the future of the Liberal party. The scales were so low down on the one side, that his nature compelled him to fill up as far as he truthfully could the other :

“ Our present duty in the House of Commons is to defend what we have already achieved, and to resist any and every attempt to neutralize or weaken past legislation in which is embodied some of the articles of the Liberal Creed.” And referring to Sir William Harcourt, “ the brilliant leader under whose consummate generalship we fought the battles of last Session, is still at our head. We have the strongest confidence in his undaunted courage and in his unrivalled sagacity.”

CHAPTER XXI

1896—1899

OUT OF OFFICE (*continued*)

"It is a great mistake to suppose that enthusiasm can be only for extremes, an enthusiasm for moderation is one of the most English characteristics."

J. K. SPENDER.

THOUGH political matters always filled the prominent place in Henry Fowler's life, his interests were not limited by the walls of Westminster. The cessation of his departmental work left a large gap in his energies, which he strove to fill elsewhere; and he placed his abilities at the service of several other than political concerns. During this period of Opposition he did much for the National Telephone Co., of which he became a Director in September, 1897. In 1898 the Company's welfare was seriously threatened by the action of Mr. Hanbury, who represented the Postmaster-General in the House of Commons, and, writes Mr. George Franklin of that Company, "it was largely owing to the energetic efforts of Sir Henry Fowler that a satisfactory arrangement was made, which removed the danger from the Company's path, and enabled it to continue its useful and successful career. Sir Henry Fowler was elected the Vice-President of the Company in 1901, and succeeded to the important office of President, on the resignation of Mr. J. S. Forbes, in the November of the same year. He was at the head of affairs when the important agreement was made in 1905, for the purchase by His Majesty's Postmaster-General of the Company's plant, property and assets, on the 31st December, 1911, when the Telephone Company's licence expired. During the period of Sir Henry Fowler's connection with the Company, the telephone business of the United Kingdom made marvellous

progress, about £6,500,000 being expended in extending and improving the telephone service of the country. He resigned his position as a Director and President of the Company in March, 1906, on his accepting office, with a seat in the Cabinet, under the Liberal Administration."

He took a lively interest in the Imperial Institute, as such letters as the following indicate :

" Sandringham,

" Norfolk,

" February 13th, 1897.

" DEAR SIR HENRY,

" The Prince of Wales desires me to say that he is very anxious that you and Lord Herschell should meet and have some conversation together respecting the Imperial Institute. Would you kindly do so ?

" Yours very truly,

" FRANCIS KNOLLYS."

And two years later Lord Knollys (as he now is) wrote again :

" Marlborough House,

" July 3rd, 1899.

" DEAR SIR HENRY,

" Although your letter is marked ' private,' I thought you would not mind my showing it confidentially to the Prince of Wales. He desires me to thank you sincerely for your kind words with reference to him, and to assure you that he much appreciates them. It gives him much pleasure to know that you give him credit for his anxiety to show uniform fairness and impartiality on all matters of a religious as well as of a public nature. In concluding I must thank you very much myself for your most kind letter.

" Believe me, yours very truly,

" FRANCIS KNOLLYS."

The Conservative Government's Indian policy at this time, however, filled Henry Fowler's mind with special interest, and he

condemned the reversing of his Chitral policy by his successor, Lord George Hamilton, on far wider than party grounds.

Lord Rosebery said in a letter: "I wish you could embody in some shape or form the unfinished draft of your Chitral Despatch in a speech. I know not how far advanced it was, but the very skeleton of the argument should be valuable." And Sir William Harcourt wrote :

" Malwood,

" Lyndhurst,

September 5th, 1897.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I wonder where you are just now ! I shall be very glad to know your views as to this bad business of the Indian Frontier. It seems to me most abundantly to justify your condemnation of the Chitral occupation.

" The attempt on the part of the Government Press to make out that it is due to a general Islam rising promoted from Constantinople, appears on the face of it absurd. If that were so, why is it not general amongst the Mohammedans in India, instead of being confined to the tribes on the road to Chitral, whose independence we pledged ourselves to respect ; and the bordering tribes south of Peshawar and the Khaiber also may be regarded as in sympathy with them.

" I suppose some of us, when we speak, shall have to deal with this question. I have your speech in the Debate of September 3rd, 1895, but I should be glad if you could give me a reference to the dates of later declarations by G. Hamilton in 1896 and 1897, boasting of the complete success of the operations and the good-will of the tribes. Also the names of the Indian authorities whom you vouched as adverse to the policy.

" I have seen important letters from Neville Chamberlain and A. Colvin in the *Saturday Review* of August 28th. What is the position or authority of Colvin ? I have understood that Sir Donald Stewart and other great Indian authorities were adverse to the Chitral policy.

" There is another important matter on which I should be glad to know your views. Before I left London I had a conversation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of the negotiations with France and the United States on the Bimetallism question. I need hardly say that the Government rejected absolutely any change in the English monetary standard and system. The only two concessions admitted as possible were :

" (1). The opening of the Indian Mints.

" (2). The holding of a certain amount of silver in the Bank reserve.

" On the latter I will not trouble you, though I regard it as wholly unworkable, having regard to the constant and violent fluctuations in the value of silver. But I wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer a letter, giving my reasons for believing that it would be most unsafe to undertake the opening of the Indian Mints at the present time. Before the closing of the mints silver was valued at 36*d.* After the closing of the Mints and the repeal of the Sherman Law, it fell to 30*d.*, at which figure it stood till a few months ago. Since that time it has fallen to a figure below 24*d.* The result of the closing of the Mints has been to raise the value of the rupee to 1*s.* 4*d.*, which is 4*d.* above its bullion value at 30*d.* At the present price of silver the bullion value of the rupee is 9*d.* Is it possible to conceive that a Bimetallist agreement between France and the United States to coin at 15.1 will raise the price of silver 7*d.*, but if it does not, what will be the value of the rupee for exchange purposes? The Chancellor of the Exchequer has reserved the question till October for discussion with the Indian Government. I cannot conceive that with their present deficit, and impending expenditure owing to the frontier war, the Government of India will ever run the risk of consenting to the opening of the Mints at the present price of silver without any security as to the future value of the rupee. It may entail the loss of many millions to the Indian Government. It is very remarkable that the immense fall in silver in the last few

months has not affected the exchange value of the rupee, which is better than it was last year.

"I believe that the expectation of a great rise in the value of silver, consequent on Bimetallism in France and the United States, is chimerical. There is no reason assigned for the great and sudden fall in the last few months.

"The idea of 'doing something for silver' is a delusion. It is like 'Humpty Dumpty'; all the King's horses and all the King's men will never raise it up again.

"It seems to me most unfair to India to make them the victims only to please the silverites in the United States.

"I can see that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in great perplexity. He professes to believe that the Bimetallist projects will in fact raise the price of silver. And he is strongly pressed by his Bimetallist colleagues. But I hope the Government of India may quash the plan.

"In England, at least, the fall of silver contemporarily with a rise in wheat of one hundred per cent. is a facer for Chaplin and Co., and knocks the bottom out of all their argumentation, as I see it has already done in the United States.

"After a delicious summer we are now in the midst of bad weather, and feeling the chilling effects of snow in the Grampians, though I doubt not that Mr. Gladstone is tobogganning there.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT.

"I have just been looking at your Financial Return which in its present form, is a most complete and invaluable conspectus of the past and present."

The forward movement of the new Indian Secretary had resulted in a rising of the tribes which grew to such an extent as to necessitate military operations on a most gigantic scale. According to Lord Lansdowne, on November 9th, 1897, the British force on the frontier numbered seventy thousand men, more than double the number that were engaged at Waterloo, and a much larger number than were ever in conflict in India before. Lord George Hamilton

said that, not even in the recollection of those who passed through the Mutiny, had there ever been so spontaneous and unaccountable an outbreak, but, said Henry Fowler, "I ask myself, and I ask you, —is it absolutely unaccountable?"

"The nation has been filled with the records of heroic courage which have upheld the proud tradition of the British Army, and displayed the unflinching loyalty of those Indian troops who rank with the bravest soldiers in the service of the Queen. But the strength and unanimity of this national feeling necessitates some reconsideration of the policy with which this brilliant campaign is involved. The Office which I held in the last Government requires that I should take some share of the responsibility for the action which their successors have reversed and censured.

"At the time when I was considering the retention of Chitral, I was officially informed that there was a certain freemasonry among the tribes in the North-West, that those who were too distant from the scene of any expedition to think of joining at once in hostilities against us, began to take some interest in their fellow-tribesmen when they heard of any permanent occupations of new tracts, and that, in their jealous desire to maintain their complete independence, they had a common link of sympathy. It appears to me that this warning was well-founded, and that it is within the range of probability that the construction of military forts and the presence of large bodies of troops in districts beyond the frontier, aroused the passionate fear of annexation, which is the hereditary patriotism of the tribes. It may be that a belief that the Chitral road and its garrisons were the first steps towards the destruction of the independence of the tribes, kindled the conflagration which cannot be extinguished except at the fearful sacrifice which the telegrams from India daily record. But when the fire has been put out, when the victory has been achieved—what next? The question not only for the people and Government of India, but for the people, Parliament and Government of Great Britain, is—what is to be our future policy in the North-West of India? The respective merits of Governments dwindle into insignificance when we are confronted with one of the gravest difficulties of our Indian Empire. Anglo-Indian statesmen, both

civil and military, are divided as to the wisest and safest frontier-policy. One section, in view of a possible invasion of India by Russia, advocate what is called the forward policy. They maintain that our frontiers should be extended until they touch the frontiers of Russia and Afghanistan. They consider that the tribes which occupy the vast region of mountains and deserts which lie between us and what may be called neighbouring Powers, should be subjugated, and their country annexed ; and thus India would secure the scientific frontier which would be of supreme advantage in case of any attack. The other section, who have been called the party of ' masterly inactivity,' maintain that every step forward weakens our defence ; that our dominions are completely guarded by the mountain ranges of the Himalayas and the Hindu-Kush ; that we should cultivate friendly relations with the intervening tribes and respect their independence ; that to conquer and hold their territory would require a large increase of the Indian army ; that the additional expenditure would be an intolerable tax on Indian resources ; that our true and safe policy is to develop the trade, the agriculture, the manufactures, railways and canals, and the health and education of the people of India ; and that it would be an act of supreme folly to abandon all these enterprises in order to spend vast sums on a military policy, the necessity for which has been denied by many of the most eminent Viceroys, the most experienced civilians, and most illustrious soldiers, who have made and maintained our Indian Empire.

" We have now two courses open to us—one is the occupation and administration of the whole country through which we have passed in the recent expeditions, the other is that, having shown our ability to defeat all hostile attacks of the tribes, we should leave the tribes alone, maintain friendly relations with them as far as possible, but avoid, not only annexation, but the appearance of annexation of their country. It has been well said that if France had a Switzerland between her and Germany she would be safer than she is now. British India has a mightier Switzerland lying across her border. Why should we destroy so strong a bulwark ? If, as Lord George Hamilton suggests, we are to construct roads, erect forts, and hold positions in Tirah and adjoining countries, we

are taking the first step which will inevitably lead to conflict, to lavish sacrifice of men and money, and finally to annexation. The attempt to open roads through these regions means a permanent military force; it means interference with the native inhabitants, punishment of offending tribes, that will be followed by further control, by punitive and probably rescuing expeditions, and in the end annexation. And at what cost, and to gain what advantage to India? We have yet to deal with the cost of the present expedition. What that cost is I do not know, but if it approaches the figures I have seen, the Indian revenue cannot meet it; and I go further—ought not to be asked to meet it. But I refer to the cost of the policy in the future. By whom is that to be defrayed? By the Indian taxpayer, or the British taxpayer? Ask the present and late Finance Ministers of India, ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I think we shall be told that India cannot, and Great Britain will not, undertake that terrible burden.

“On political, on financial, on administrative grounds, as well as upon the strategical grounds on which I am not competent to speak, but with respect to which I know the opinions of some of the greatest soldiers in Her Majesty’s forces, we oppose the policy, however disguised, which means the occupation and the annexation of the vast tracts of country held by the tribes on the North-West.

“The frontier policy which we believe to-day to be the wisest, the safest and the best was accurately defined by the Duke of Devonshire when as Secretary of State for India he said: ‘We do not intend to trust to a scientific frontier. We do not intend to look only to mountain passes and strongholds, and we think that some attention should be paid to the fact that these mountain-passes and strongholds are held by men, and are inhabited by men, of whom the strongest characteristic is their deep attachment to their independence. We will try to teach them once more that we ourselves respect that independence, and that in our own interests, and for the protection of our own frontier, we will assist them to maintain that independence, against any comer, from whatever quarter he may come.’

“I have always done my utmost to keep Indian affairs outside

the range of party controversy. I have felt it to be my duty, though at the cost of the most unscrupulous misrepresentation, to support in legislation and in administration the Indian policy of the Government, when I have considered it on the whole to be right. The question now before us is an Imperial question which the final authority in the Empire can alone decide. Holding, as I do, the strongest convictions with respect to the occupation of Chitral, the making of the military road, and the threatened occupation of the territories beyond the frontier, I am bound to oppose a policy which I believe to be fraught with danger to the safety and prosperity of our Indian Empire."

The following far-sighted comment on my father's opposition to the Government's policy appeared in the *World* :

"The country expects moderation, fairness and good sense from Sir Henry Fowler, but it expects something more. It expects grasp of facts, command of principle, and a statesmanlike perception and it usually gets them. He attacked the policy of the Indian frontier expedition with great force of statement and reasoning, but he avoided the unworthy imputations of bad faith into which some of his colleagues have been betrayed. He is in the Radical party rather than of it. If the Radical party is ever again to become the Liberal party, it will be through his increasing influence in its councils. A better example of the rising statesmanship of the middle classes cannot be found than that which Sir Henry Fowler exhibits. The impression that a statesman is great because he deals with great affairs, and becomes great by dealing with them, will scarcely survive a scrutiny of the components of Cabinets during the last century. Who drives fat oxen is not necessarily himself fat. The opposite impression that to be busy in parochial business parochializes the intelligence and produces only a superior sort of vestryman, will just as little stand the test of examination. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Henry Fowler are crucial instances to the contrary. The fact is that it is not the training, but the character and intellect that are trained, that are the vital elements in the matter. Almost any sort of discipline will serve the purpose, if the proper faculties be there, —the Town Council and the solicitor's office nearly as well as the

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University and the Bar. Imperially-minded statesmen have issued from the former; parish politicians and pettifoggers from the latter. He who wants proof need only look around him."

He also received many private letters on the same subject. One from Lord Rosebery :

" Dalmeny Park,

" Edinburgh,

" November 22nd, 1897.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I must send you a line expressive of the great delight with which I have read your speech. The calm statement, the deadly moderation of tone, the overwhelming argument as to policy with which it concludes, make it a State paper which it will take many thousand platform speakers to impair.

" I hope it will be at once printed in a cheap form, and circulated broadcast; for it deals, quite conclusively, with a subject in which the whole nation is deeply interested.

" You have done a good day's work for your party and yourself; and, more than all, for your country. You discharge yourself much too *rarely*; but truly you are a twenty-one ton gun when you do.

" Yours always,

" R."

One from the then Indian Secretary, whose policy he had attacked :

" Bowood,

" Calne,

" Wilts,

" November 22nd, 1897.

" DEAR SIR HENRY,

" I must write a line to congratulate you upon the admirable tone and spirit of your speech on Saturday. You skilfully availed yourself of the points in your favour, and yet said nothing that, directly, or indirectly, would give offence to Elgin.

"Goschen and Lansdowne are both here, and entirely concur in this view of your speech.

"I do not think there will be much difference between us, as to what should be our policy of the future.

"Believe me, yours very truly,

"GEORGE HAMILTON."

"1, Paper Buildings,

"Temple, London, E.C.

"22 November, 1897.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"Please accept my best congratulations on your magnificent speech. It is one of the most masterly statements of a complicated case that I have read, and it will produce a great and lasting impression upon the country.

"The confusion it has caused (even after the interval of Sunday) among the enemy is evidenced by the *Times* article this morning, in which they fall foul of me, and try to set us against one another.

"I have thought it well to send them a few lines stating the true facts.

"Yours very sincerely,

"H. H. ASQUITH."

"Oriol College,

"Oxford,

"December 5th, 1897.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I am extremely glad that you think what I said at Coatbridge about the N. W. Frontier war can be of any use; but the whole case was so fully and admirably, and indeed unanswerably, put by you, that it seemed to me almost superfluous to refer to it further.

"Through Scotland and the North of England there seems to be a strong though quiet set of opinion against the Government, especially on the N. W. Frontier question. Not a few Tories tell me they condemn the whole thing.

"Sincerely yours,

"JAMES BRYCE."

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" The *Saturday Review*,

" 38, Southampton Street,

" Strand.

" 22nd November, 1897.

" DEAR SIR,

" I intend to print your recent address on India *verbatim et literatim* in the *Saturday Review*, as I think it has been very insufficiently dealt with in many of the London Daily Papers.

" May I ask you kindly to furnish me with an authentic report of it.

" I have never yet printed a political address in the *Saturday Review*, but yours is one of the most complete statements of a case I have read in the English language.

" It is past being dealt with in a Leading Article or special article, and sums up fairly the arguments against the disastrous Forward Policy which is bringing ruin on our Indian Empire.

" I remain,

" Yours faithfully,

" FRANK HARRIS."

" 33, North Side,

" Clapham Common, S.W.

" November 22nd, 1897.

" DEAR FOWLER,

" I have been spending a long and happy day with you. I have read, and closely analyzed, your superb speech, and have written three columns of newspaper type upon it for two leading Indian newspapers. Thank you again and again. It takes one back to the very best Gladstonian period, and is the finest fighting speech by far that we have had since the great catastrophe. It is all the stronger for your candid fairness and sense of justice to your opponents. I always read your annual speeches with pleasure and profit, and have done so every since you entered Parliament. To say that you have excelled yourself is the highest compliment I can pay you.

" What I always like about your speeches is their ' teaching '

quality. You have put the Frontier question into a series of clear, logical, readable, and understandable, sentences, that explain the whole mystery like a school-primer, and bring conviction well home.

"Ever since Chitral I have felt that this Frontier question will give the Opposition their first great opportunity. You are the man to drive it home in the Queen's Speech. May I be there to hear you !

"I am only afraid you have done the job too soon, and that the Forward Movement will collapse before you can get at it across the table of the House. You have simply shaken the life out of it, like a terrier with a rat. I have read carefully to-day, not only your speech, but every leading article upon it I could lay my hands upon. You will no doubt get them all, and will agree with me that the impression made is simply tremendous. I hope you will have it at once set up in readable type, and pamphlet form, with a good map or two. Don't think £200 or £300 thrown away in making the price such as will enable Liberal members and candidates to circulate it broadcast. If I were either I should send it with my compliments to every elector in my constituency.

"If it had been any other day but Saturday I should have come to Wolverhampton to hear it. It is just the sort of speech that will vitally affect the next general election, and any by-election could be won on it and nothing else.

"I hope you are none the worse for the effort, and believe me

"Most sincerely yours,
"W. S. CAINE."

"57, Elm Park Gardens,
"South Kensington, S.W.
"November 25th, 1897.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I go with every word that Rosebery says about your most masterly speech.

"Truly,
"J. MORLEY."

At the beginning of the next year—1898—my father received a gift of the Queen's portrait as a souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee. It was from a photograph of the Queen taken in the dress worn by Her Majesty on the 22nd June, 1897. He acknowledged it in this letter :

“ Woodthorne,
“ Wolverhampton,
“ January 20th, 1898.

“ DEAR SIR ARTHUR BIGGE,

“ I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of the portrait of Her Majesty which she has graciously presented to me as a souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee. May I ask you in my name to express to Her Majesty my grateful appreciation of her kind remembrance of me, and my assurance that I and mine will always loyally cherish this portrait as a memento of an era unparalleled in English history, and of a Sovereign whom it was my high privilege and my great happiness to serve in the administration of the Indian Empire.

“ Yours very truly,
“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

In the same month he wrote to Mr. John Morley referring to political and other events. Political affairs at this time were looking very drear. As a New Year's message Mr. Morley wrote : “ The old year has gone out gloomily enough, as you say, just like 1797, and in that analogy '98 will be no improvement.”

“ Woodthorne,
“ Wolverhampton,
“ 14 January, 1898.

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ Can you give me Carnegie's address on the Riviera ? I was very sorry not to meet you at Armitstead's as I should have liked a chat with you. Kimberley's was an admirable speech. I see that Perks has made a Nonconformist deliver-

ance. I have not seen him since, nor did I know that he intended saying in public what I knew were his private views. It is reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of yesterday and indicates strong opposition to the Irish Catholic University. I am not surprised to hear that Harcourt is 'down.' The Derby and similar programmes mean

(a) The enormous strengthening of all the powers of the House of Lords,

(b) The disruption of the Liberal party and the ultimate division of parties into the Haves and the Have-nots, and when that supreme folly is achieved I know which side (in this country) will win. I see that I am speaking the night after your Stirling demonstration. If I say what I think I shall incur the displeasure of some of our friends.

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

There is in the above a tone of impatience which was not usual in Henry Fowler's political mind, and which indicates a deep disapproval on his part of some of the internal cross currents of the Liberal party. Of course, it must be remembered that this was a private letter to a confidential friend, and that probably no indications of this impatience were apparent outside; but in this book, which is the story of a life and not the history of a party or even a statesman, it is interesting to note the personal ups and downs which bring the historical figure into a living and very human personality.

A few days later he opened a Liberal Club at Cleckheaton and spoke at a huge evening meeting. At the former he expressed his views about the worth of such clubs: "He regarded the club, as he understood theirs was, of the younger members of the party, as of great educational value. He thought that in the rubbing together of mind with mind, the discussing, as they would discuss—and as they ought to discuss—with pleasant friction and agreeable difference of opinion, the many questions that would arise, the young men would find out that they could not arrive

at clear correct views on any question without hammering it out and talking it over. He hoped the effect of the club would be to introduce an element of thought in connection with politics, and that not only would they hold clear views on public questions, but they would be enabled to give good, sound, real reasons for the views that they held, and to show that they were not mere prejudices which for the time being they happened to entertain. The club would also be a social advantage to the Liberal party. It was an advantage to the party that they should know each other socially, and meet in social enjoyment, and they would find the result of this social connection and the educational process which would be going on would be to deepen and increase combination and co-operation. It would prepare them and the constituency for the fights that would inevitably come. It would be a good thing for the younger Liberals to hold clear views and to express them on local politics. Local politics were the bread and butter of every-day life, and required as much looking after as Imperial Government, and he looked more perhaps to the future development of many of the causes in which they were so deeply interested through local instrumentality, and local sentiment, and local action, rather than to Imperial action or periodical Parliamentary elections which might only occur once in seven years."

And at the evening meeting he spoke of some of the difficulties and dangers, which personally lay heavy on his spirits, but which publicly he endeavoured to meet and to mitigate.

"We suffer as a party a great deal from a characteristic of the present day—a characteristic of our political, and public, and our newspaper life—a characteristic alike of the Press and the people—the characteristic of exaggeration. Everything appears to be described and denounced and represented in the style of the evening paper; and most of the astounding facts which appear in the evening papers you never hear of next morning. The wonderful event, the gigantic crime, the unparalleled sensation does not survive another rising of the sun. Now as a party we have suffered, and are suffering a great deal, from exaggeration; exaggeration of our position, exaggeration of the past and of the present state of our party. I think the true answer to all this is, what is the state

of the facts? I have an impression that the ghost of a thing is always worse than the reality. I think that a party has its winters as well as its summers. It is an essential element of political life as well as of animal, vegetable and national life. We are now in our winter, and I do not shrink from referring to our great defeat in 1895.

"What was the cause of that defeat? Whenever an army is defeated there is always a large class of people who say that it is the fault of the generals; and sometimes people say that it is the fault of the soldiers. I do not myself stop to apportion the blame or censure with respect to that defeat. But I think who ever was to blame for it, what the defeat amounted to was this—it was a verdict, a clear and distinct verdict of disapproval on the part of the constituencies, not of the administration of the Liberal Government—that I think was hardly ever raised—but it was a disapproval of proposed legislation; and all the sections affected by that legislation have combined together with resistless force, and hence the defeat of the Government, which at one and the same moment was working right and left, north and south; and with its diminished forces and its exhausted resources it was not able to confront that powerful combination."

* * * * *

"Somebody has said that the first duty of an Opposition is to oppose. This is a statement which is at once true and false. The duty of an Opposition is to oppose what is bad—it is not the duty of an Opposition to oppose what is good. But above all it is not the duty of a Liberal Opposition which professes to wish good legislation, to oppose legislation which they believe to be good and beneficial simply because it is promoted by those to whom they are politically opposed. Therefore, the Opposition did not oppose the Irish Land Bill. They supported it, and if they had been disposed to play what was once described in the House of Commons as a dirty trick, there are times when if we had put our principles into our pockets and looked only for our own advantage, we might have done some very considerable mischief to that legislation. But under the leadership of Mr. Morley the party stood firm, and upon that point did what they thought was right to the

people of Ireland irrespective of any political consequences at home.

* * * * * * *

“ I tell you candidly I care very little for Liberal programmes, but I care a great deal for Liberal principles. There is an old-fashioned prejudice in this country in favour of doing one thing at a time, and doing it well. There is no doubt, no difficulty in any man's mind as to what Liberal principles are. The history of the last sixty years of the century has been the record of what Liberal principles are, and how they have been developed, not always by a Liberal Government, not infrequently by Conservative Governments, as in the case of Catholic Emancipation, as in the case of Free Trade, as in the case of the Extension of the Franchise ; but the principles were ours. Difficulties and differences have arisen, and always will arise, as to what is practicable, what is most pressing, what the special needs of the times require, and what represents the desire of the greatest number of the people of this country. To quote Mr. Gladstone's words : ‘ You must have regard to the ripeness or unripeness of public opinion, and to the favourable or unfavourable conjunction of circumstances.’ And I think we have learned very little if we have not learned the wisdom and the truth of this. We have not to prescribe until we are called in. Our duty at present is not to forestall what the country will most desire two or three years hence, or whenever the time may arrive when the Liberal party is called to power. We have to resist what is reactionary, we have to resist what is unjust, we have to attempt to prevent the doing of what is wrong, and when we have succeeded in that, the time may arrive when we shall have to decide, not our measures, not our principles, not our policy, but what is the best mode, the surest mode, the most practicable mode, of carrying those measures into effect. You must ever bear in mind in all our party conflicts, in all our party combats, in our victories and in our defeats, that there is in this country one gigantic, supreme force, which is greater than party, which pervades all parties, which conquers all parties, which is at once the impregnable bulwark against reaction and against revolution, and that force is the strong common sense of the British people. That

predominant power dictates the direction of all party politics, and of all party action ; that predominant power secures that the rate of progress shall not be too rapid nor too slow ; it discerns the larger national issues which are sometimes obscured in the smoke and confusion of sectional conflicts ; it knows by its unerring instincts that progress is the resistless force in political, in commercial, in social, in national life ; it knows that stagnation is decay and death ; and our appeal is, will be, must be, to that final tribunal. If we are true to ourselves as patriots, if we are true to the illustrious traditions of our party, if we are true to the great principles which that party has always professed, on which it was founded, by which it has been guided, of unceasing protest against unequal privileges, unequal laws, unequal administration, if we also remember that the one aim of all Governments, I care not how that Government is composed, is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, we may confidently anticipate the ultimate issue of that great conflict in which we are now engaged."

On the following day he wrote to Mr. Morley :

" Woodthorne,

" Wolverhampton,

" 30th January, 1898.

" MY DEAR MORLEY,

" The condensation of the report of my speech in the London papers is so defective and so completely ignores the main points of my deliverance that (valuing as I do your opinion), I cannot help sending you the fuller report in the local paper. I have to go into the Election here for the greater part of the week, and unless Harcourt has his meeting of ex-colleagues either on Thursday afternoon or Friday forenoon, I cannot be present. The rumours here are that we shall win by a small majority, but it is an uphill fight and the contest is really between the whole public-house party and the temperance party.

" We had a splendid meeting at Cleckheaton. The tone was very encouraging.

" Yours faithfully,

" HENRY H. FOWLER."

In the February of that year Mr. Gladstone died, and with him died, though not perhaps at once, much of the old Liberalism. Many an important chapter was drawing to its close with the end of the great and wonderful Nineteenth Century, and one of the greatest was that of Mr. Gladstone's life.

"The final judgment," said my father, "on the illustrious career of Mr. Gladstone rests with posterity, but his colleagues, his followers, and his contemporaries, can estimate, as posterity can never estimate, the loss which his death has inflicted upon Parliament, upon the policy, and upon the public life of the great nation of which he was pre-eminently and confessedly the greatest and foremost citizen. At a critical period when a question was raised as to the future leadership of the Liberal party, Mr. Morley quickly closed the controversy by his memorable utterance: 'There is no vacancy.' There is a vacancy now, there is a void, a blank, which has not and which cannot be filled. Unstinted appreciation of his rare genius, of his matchless powers, of his unique personality, of his high tone of character, and of his Christian statesmanship, has been the spontaneous utterance of men of all parties, of all classes, of different races, and conflicting creeds. The nation in the widest sense of that inclusive word mourns his death as a national loss, and the nation interred him with sublime simplicity in that sacred spot

" 'Where points the muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those who cannot die' "

About this time he received the following letters from Sir William Harcourt :

" Chatsworth,

" Chesterfield,

" January 14th, 1898.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I hear from J. Ellis that you are not disposed to take the initiative yourself in bringing on the Indian Frontier question on the Address, and I quite understand that you would wish to reserve yourself till the Government have disclosed their defence.

" I think it clear we must have an Amendment in some shape and that it must be placed in safe and capable hands. Lawson Walton has been suggested, and I think he will be the best choice. If you agree, will you send me a telegram to Malwood, Lyndhurst, where I shall be to-morrow, and I will write to invite him to prepare himself. Of course we shall keep the form of the motion in our own hands.

" I think both Plymouth and York very satisfactory, as in both places there was a strong Conservative majority to encounter.

" I have taken Onslow's house again in Richmond Terrace. I hope all our colleagues will come up to town a few days before the meeting so that we may have good time to consult together.

" I myself shall go to London on the last day of this month.

" Yours sincerely,

" W. V. HARCOURT."

" Malwood,

" Lyndhurst,

" January 27th, 1898.

" DEAR FOWLER,

" I have no doubt that the long-expected vacancy at Wolverhampton occupies you a good deal. I hear from Parliament Street that we have a fair chance of the seat, but they will not know so well as you do.

" I go up to London to the house I had last year, 7, Richmond Terrace. I hope very much that you will be able to be in London some days before the opening as it is of great importance that we should be able to consult on many subjects and particularly on the shape in which the question of Indian Frontier will have to be launched. Lawson Walton will have to be coached well beforehand, and we must settle the form of the motion, which will be by no means an easy job. You will have seen by G. Hamilton's speech to-day the line they mean to take.

"(1). That Chitral and the road are British Territory, by which he intends absurdly to treat the 'sphere of influence' as the same thing, *i.e.*, that the agreement with the Amir not to interfere amounted to an incorporation of the tribe in our dominion.

"(2). That we made the road, which, I suppose, means that a road was made for the relief expedition.

"But the question was not the making, but the occupation of the road.

"From G. Hamilton's point of view what is meant by 'respecting the independence of the tribes'?

"All these points require very careful consideration, and, as I shall have briefly to deal with them in my opening speech on the Address, I again pray you to come early to London.

"From what I can hear, the Government are not likely to be able to stick to the rather absurd conditions they attached to the Chinese loan and they will have to give up either the Loan or the conditions. So long as we insist on our 'most favoured nation' rights under the Treaty of Tientsin (and I do not see that either Russia or Germany have as yet done anything to infringe them), I do not see of what we have to complain or what is the justification of all this bellicose boom, of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be ashamed.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

"Malwood,

"Lyndhurst,

"January 28th, 1898.

"DEAR FOWLER,

"Our letters crossed. I am glad that Lawson Walton is well posted up. I certainly concur in your view as to the nature of the Resolution, but it will not be an easy one to put into appropriate words.

"I wish you would draft your own idea of it and that you will be able to be in London in the middle of next week, when

we can excogitate it. I have written to all our friends to beg them to gather together in good time as the situation is one which requires a good deal of consideration.

"I am glad you are able to give a favourable diagnosis at Wolverhampton.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

"7, Richmond Terrace,

"Whitehall,

"February 1st, 1898.

"DEAR FOWLER,

"Many thanks for your letter.

"I enclose one just received from Lawson Walton. I agree with him that we must directly challenge the past policy of the Government as to Chitral—otherwise we should not be able to hold our men.

"I will try to arrange a general meeting of our friends for Friday as that day will suit you best, and will let you know.

"I am glad you gave it Stead hot.

"I am sorry your prognostications of Wolverhampton are not so favourable.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

Shortly afterwards my father wrote Mr. Morley :

"Woodthorne,

2nd February, 1898.

"MY DEAR MORLEY,

"Harcourt sent me L. Walton's note. I see no reason why speeches (especially Walton's) should not deal with the whole history of the Chitral policy past and present. My doubt is as to the wording of the Amendment. We must not forget that as an Opposition we did not challenge in 1896 or 1897 the policy adopted in 1895, and the reason was their allegation that the tribes had consented and were maintaining the road. We said (Harcourt and myself) in 1895 that we

did not believe that an effectual consent could be obtained, but that did not appear until 1897. My chief aim is to prevent future mischief, and if we are to do anything in this direction it must be by a declaration of future policy. However, we shall, I hope, meet to-morrow at half-past four, and then we can fully discuss this most difficult question. I enclose you Bunce's leader in to-day's *Post* on the Edgbaston controversy—and also a very good speech of Osler's, who is now the leader of our party in Birmingham, and which I think is an answer to Chamberlain. I do not agree with you that (in the event of the country returning a Liberal majority and everything depends on that) a Liberal Government would not be formed. If the country desires a Liberal Administration it is out of the power of any two (or six) men to prevent that desire from being realized. And no party (if it wins) will tolerate that any personal quarrel between any two of its leaders shall hand the country over to Tory Government and Tory policy.

"No man (not even a Peel, Beaconsfield or Gladstone) is essential. And we must not exaggerate the disastrous results of this disastrous squabble.

"Liberalism is not dead. If we are beaten to-day we shall be beaten by

"(1). Beer and Local Veto.

"(2). Money.

"(3). Local employers' influence.

"(4). Villiers' deadly hostility to any Liberal action.

"(5). Dread of the Labour Party—accentuated by the strike from which many of the manufacturers have suffered.

"When you get this the result will be known. I dare not prophesy.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. H. FOWLER."

It would be utterly out of place here to try even to pry into the differences to which my father refers.

In July of that year he received the following letter from Lord Rosebery :

“ Vienna,

“ July 21st, 1898.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Many thanks for your congratulations on the Eclipse Stakes. But I don't like the tone of the rest of your note. The condition of the Liberal party presents no ground for despair—quite the contrary. There are, no doubt, as always in human affairs, irksome incidents, but the ball would appear to be almost at the feet of the Liberal party. This may be an ignorant and sanguine view, but it is that of an unbiassed outsider !

“ Yours sincerely,

“ R.”

During that year's Session my father spoke frequently on Indian matters, as shown by the following letter from Lord Elgin in July, 1898 :

“ Viceregal Lodge,

“ Simla,

“ July 5th, 1898.”

“ DEAR SIR HENRY FOWLER,

“ I cannot allow the debates that have reached us by the last two Mails to pass without a word of acknowledgment of the kindness of your reference to myself. As you truly said, we have not always been able to agree in matters of policy. No one has regretted it more than I have done. But I have known throughout that I should never experience at your hands anything but sympathetic and generous treatment. That you have been able now that I am approaching the end of my time in India to express your appreciation so warmly is, I need hardly say, most gratifying to me.

“ May I take this opportunity of saying not only on my own account, but I am sure on behalf of everyone connected with the Government of India, how deeply indebted we have felt for the support you have given us, and for the manner in which again and again you have lifted the discussion of Indian affairs out of the rut of party politics into which it threatened to fall. . . . Your determination not to treat

India as a party question . . . greatly facilitates our work in many other respects

"It would be improper for me to attempt to discuss Currency reform, but perhaps I may just say this, that while it was our duty to frame a scheme, we all felt we could not expect unaided to elaborate plans that would be above criticism. We shall have no jealousy, but on the contrary shall receive gratefully any advice and guidance your Committee can give.

"I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"ELGIN."

My father was much interested at that time in the project of his friend John Morley to write Mr. Gladstone's "Life." "A worthy biographer" of so great a subject, he called him, and when the book actually appeared no one read it with keener interest and approval than did my father. Mr. Morley wrote to him about it :

"57, Elm Park Gardens,

"South Kensington, S.W.

"October 23rd, 1898.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"It is very kind of you to take an interest in my project. I believe that I have absolutely provided for every one of the conditions that you enumerate, without qualification. To-morrow I shall find myself on the scene of action ; with the archives before me ; and rather melancholy it will be to find the old lion really gone. I expect to be there until the end of the week.

"We are delighted to think that you have got your daughter back.* Lady Fowler and you have rather more than your share of this kind of tribulation.

"Kindest regards from both of us to all of you.

"Ever yours,

"JOHN MORLEY."

* Who had been very ill with scarlet fever in a little watering-place on the coast of North Devon.

A few months later one of the kaleidoscopic changes of the political outlook was effected by the retirement of Sir William Harcourt altogether from the leadership of the Liberal party, and a few weeks afterwards the expressed determination of Mr. Morley to give up his active political work. Henry Fowler received the following letters from them both :

“ Malwood,

“ Confidential.

“ Lyndhurst,

“ December 15th, 1898.

“ DEAR FOWLER,

“ You are quite right to suppose that the *Daily Mail* (which I never see) had no influence on my decision, which was taken four months ago at the close of the Session. The only question was the time of the announcement. The Liberal party may be an unfortunate one, but I am resolved as long as I have anything to do with it, to endeavour to make it an honest one. It was time that the system of organized intrigue with which it is honeycombed should be crushed out and the operators forced to come out in the open.

“ I suppose now with a new Leader there will be a new programme and a new policy. I shall be anxious to see what it is.

“ I have letters from Bryce, Campbell-Bannerman and Kimberley, all saying that they are not surprised at my decision. I was never more satisfied with anything than I am of its necessity.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ W. V. HARCOURT.”

“ P.S.—I think E. Grey’s speech excellent and very handsome towards me. I have certainly done all I could to bring him forward, feeling that he is the young hope of the party.”

" 57, Elm Park Gardens,

" South Kensington, S.W.

" December 15th, 1898.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" Thanks for your letters. I feel we can only agree to differ about this transaction. My judgment on it is unshaken.

" Whatever course I may adopt, and my mind is pretty nearly fixed, I shall always look back to your connection with me, with satisfaction, and hearty recognition, as having been a loyal, kind, and helpful friend for fifteen years, alike below the gangway and on the Front Bench.

" Yours very sincerely,

" JOHN MORLEY.

" Warm regards to the ladies."

My father alluded to these changes thus :

" The great Parliamentary reputation of Sir William Harcourt, the services which he has rendered to the House of Commons as a party leader, as a debater, as an unflinching advocate of the dignity of that House, the great services that he has rendered to his country as a legislator, and as an administrator, constitute one of the most valued treasures of the House of Commons. The announcement without notice of his resignation of the leadership of the Liberal party is a blow which, I do not conceal from my own mind, it is almost impossible to overrate. I have been the colleague of Sir William Harcourt in three Administrations. I have been under him in two great Departments of the State, the Home Office and the Treasury, and I can say with the most literal truth that it would have been impossible to have had a more generous, a more considerate, or a more indulgent chief. I regard it as one of my most pleasing recollections of political life that I had the honour of being associated with him as one of his henchmen in carrying that great Act known as the Finance Act through the House of Commons. Six weeks later, when the party was still reeling under the blow of Sir William Harcourt's resignation, Mr. John Morley declared that he had decided no longer to take an active and responsible part in the formal counsels of the heads

of the Liberal party. Now to know Mr. Morley is to admire him ; and the more you know him the more you admire him. His position, his power in the Liberal party, rest not only on his brilliant abilities, his wide experience of men and of affairs, in his luminous and forcible oratory, but in a personal charm which enchains everyone who has the privilege of being brought within its influence. I have known Mr. Morley, and I have been intimately associated with him, since he entered Parliament. For sixteen years we have sat together below the gangway, on the Treasury Bench and on the front Opposition Bench. I have looked up to him for political guidance, and I have regarded my friendship with him as a political education, a political inspiration ; and I cannot convey to you the regret and the pain which I feel at the severance which I hope will be but of temporary duration ”

As events subsequently proved, my father's hopes were realized in the re-union with Mr. Morley in active political life. The break was not a permanent one—their byways separated, but they met again on the great political highway ; and it was one of Henry Fowler's great happinesses in his latter years that this old comradeship was renewed, that they sat together again in a Liberal Cabinet, and that his greatest friend in the House of Commons was his friend and companion when he entered the House of Lords. My father was not a sentimental man, but he always showed real sentiment in speaking of his long and intimate friendship with Lord Morley.

The changes in the Liberal party and the resignation of Sir William Harcourt involved the election of another Liberal Leader in the House of Commons. Henry Fowler's name was freely mentioned and he was approached on the matter. Then it was that his intense caution proved a clog upon his career. Not only did it lead him to distrust his own powers, his physical strength, his political wisdom, his general ability to undertake so onerous and so momentous a task, but it also led others, of the more advanced sections of the party, to distrust his quiet, moderate statesmanship, and to imagine that because he lacked the enthusiasm for extremes he lacked the enthusiasm which is one of the essential characteristics of a popular Liberal Leader. They did

not realize that to be enthusiastic is not necessarily to be noisy nor how great a strength may lie in the enthusiasm for moderation, and how in the long run it may lead a party not only more safely, but even further, along the way of sound advance, than

The Fowla



This abill Animal is wonderfull strong and
 mood and it can jump up and carry it
 louse along with it if it likes to. It is very
 solid and watry and has got a large pesserding
 body behind it. It knows all about howdahs and
 rajahs and things and it can turn pounds and
 shillings into troopees while you wait. It
 knows the difference between a military road
 and a footpath and if made it itself or if someone
 else did - which is more than some people do. It can
 make the forgiehamme wish he had never had a
 birthday. It is a very nice cortier and queens
 like it immensely. It wears a indian shawl on state
 occasions, it doesn't fancy kilts. It is leader of the
 libral party - so is about half a dozen others too -
 they all do it at once but it dosnt matter much
 just now

[Reduced by kind permission of the Proprietors of 'Punch.']

the wild rushes of the extremist who sees neither perils nor pitfalls in his impulsive career.

"Sir Henry Fowler," wrote a leading paper, "is a thoroughly safe man. Perhaps a little too safe to aspire to satisfy the popular idea of a Prime Minister."

"Sir Henry Fowler," wrote another, "is of all the men thought of, the nearest to the old grand ideal of which Sir William Harcourt

is a type, and of whose refinement Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright were the impressive embodiments. He is an out and out reformer. He is master of finance, second not even to the author of the greatest Budget of the century. He is a tireless workman. And a veritable draught-horse of administrative labour. No one has ever impugned his honesty of purpose or his frankness. His hands are clean. He understands the Liberal party and its wants because he knows his England and what its interests call for. He is the centre of the whole charter of Liberal reform. He is sound on all the authorized shibboleths of his party, upon many of the unauthorized as well; and he is gifted with a fascinating capacity for bringing into line men who desire to rush ahead of companion reformers. Sir Henry Fowler has never on any single occasion delivered a bad, or an ill-considered, or ill-constructed speech. His addresses on India delivered as Secretary of State, and afterwards, will rank with the finest examples of the impressionist school of oratory, as they may be also included in the most glowing, upon the greatness of our Indian Empire and the claims of its people at our hands."

The *Spectator* also wrote on this subject a few years later the same opinions :

"Sir Henry Fowler is one of the strongest men left to the Radical party. It is in administration that they are weakest, and in the difficult position of Indian Secretary he showed not only a great force, but a power of seeing into the centre of a complicated mass of details, and of realizing conditions among which he has not lived, which is unusual even among statesmen. He has a strong business head, coupled with imagination which business men are so often, we think unjustly, accused of lacking. He is, moreover, a very good debater, whose clearness of thought and readiness of speech always secures the ear of the House of Commons. Above all, Sir Henry Fowler has the quality now so wanting in British politicians—moral courage. He dare defy the House of Commons, as he did while Secretary of State for India on three occasions; or his own party, as he has done about the South African War; or even, when it is indispensable, that overwhelming entity of the people. He would, if the waves of faction ran high, make an admirable Leader of the House, which

sometimes requires to be led rather than conciliated. No one, moreover, doubts that he is a sincere Liberal, that he is opposed to privilege and desirous of progress, that he is jealous for the ascendancy of the Lower House, or that he is ardent in his wish to keep down popular burdens. Nevertheless, because he believed with three-fourths of the people of the country, and certainly one-half of his own party, that the South African War could not have been avoided, and must be carried on to success, the Radicals declare that he is impossible, and if they are Irishmen, are ready to vote against any resolution he brings forward simply because he has brought it. Future historians will stare to find that, at a moment when a great party was at its lowest ebb, and was aware that much of its defeat was owing to want of leaders, its first occupation was to rid itself of one of the ablest men it had because, forsooth, he agreed with the majority of his countrymen in considering that being at war, it was indispensable, or at all events most expedient, to win."

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, however, was appointed leader in the House of Commons, and with that generous spirit which in Henry Fowler was never cramped by rivalry, he said of the new leader. "I must take the earliest opportunity of expressing our satisfaction and our approval of the choice which the Liberal Members of the House of Commons have made. We know Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is possessed of the qualifications which make a wise, sagacious, and successful political leader. We know what he is in council, in administration; we also know what he is in Parliamentary experience, in Parliamentary tact, in Parliamentary popularity; and I can certainly bear testimony to you that there is a feeling of loyalty to him and confidence in him in the Liberal party in the House of Commons that augurs very brightly for his future success."

In December, 1898, Mr. Asquith wrote:

" 20, Cavendish Square,

" 19th December, 1898.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" Thank you very much for your letter. I appreciate very highly your agreement with, and your kind com

mendation of what I said at Birmingham. I have rarely been in a tighter situation.

"I should like very much to have a little talk with you. Could we lunch together at the Athenæum to-morrow; or if that does not suit you, could you appoint a place of meeting later—say between 5.30 and 7?"

"Yours very sincerely,

"H. H. ASQUITH."

And Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman also wrote the following letters to my father on the political situation:

"Belmont Castle,

"Meigle, N.B.,

"22nd December, 1898.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"I have not seen any public record of your mind upon the present situation, but I know it without you telling me.

* * * * *

On all the big questions there is a *via media* for sensible men in the party, and it has only to follow that path to get through. There is surely some possible foothold between the extremists on either side. I believe the malcontents and mischief-makers to be very few; but the sensible men want to be pulled together. With this turn-up there are not many of us left. We must stick together. I am ready to support anybody who might be chosen as leader, and I have the most sincere and profound desire to escape from that pinnacle myself. But whoever it may be that the general feeling points to when the time comes, we who remain of the old Cabinet will, I am quite sure, act as one man, with the most cordial good feeling. I am very sure that you will agree in all this. Luckily as the weeks pass on our opinions will calm and settle.

"Yours very truly,

"H. C.-B."

The next day he wrote again : “ Belmont Castle,

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ December 23rd, 1898.

“ What a coincidence our letters being written on the same day ! But as I knew would be the case we take entirely the same view of this complication. As to what you suggest for the procedure to be followed, I think your idea is excellent. I was in communication with Ellis about it before he went abroad, and he thought that towards the end of January the members of the Front Bench, of all grades, should be called together in order to get them into line before the party meeting. This might be done in my house on the ground of my seniority. I daresay it is expedient to conciliate them, but on the other hand there are one or two upsetting gentlemen among them, and we must not set any precedent for a general consultation of them in every question,—a new arrangement which would be very agreeable to one or two who could be named ! I have no recollection of any such meeting when Hartington was elected. Your proposal covers other ground ; it might take the form of a mere consultation or of a dinner. I think the latter has its advantages. There are only nine of us all told, five peers and four commoners. We have plenty of time to look about us. As to myself people generally are very good-natured to me, and I am extremely gratified by the cordial and decided view you express. I should enormously prefer to be less conspicuous, if it was not required in the party's interest. But we shall see. I think in a week or two I will run up to London and see what my doctor says to it ; and when I am there, perhaps we could arrange to meet and have a little talk on things. I detect a little scepticism in what you say of my cold. It was, I assure you, a real one and a bad one ; nothing diplomatic about it ; but it is the first time in my life that I was honestly glad to be advised by a doctor to go to bed and stay there. With all good wishes,

“ Yours very truly,

“ H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.”

And again a few days later :

“ Belmont Castle,

“ 3rd January, 1899.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I have been corresponding with Tweedmouth as to the suggestion that all men on the Front Bench should be brought together. I saw great objections to a formal convocation of them, which I think you fully share. But the idea is now that I should ask them all to dine with me (as being, alas ! the senior) some days before the opening, and this seems to me to put a new face upon it. In fact this appears to me to be a very desirable thing, and to avoid the evils of a special meeting. There would be conversation and interchange of ideas, without definite consultation and it will obviously be necessary for us to bring all these men into co-operation in order to inspire the party.

“ Since I wrote you I wrote to my doctor who knows my constitution and asked what he thought of the prospect if it came off. He replies that he knows *à priori* of no reason why I should not undertake the duties. This so far eases the question that I think I shall not go up to town till about the 23rd of this month.

“ Yours very truly,

“ H. C.-B.”

The advice that Henry Fowler gave to his party as under a new leader they would turn over a fresh page in their political history, was : “ What we must have as a party if we are to do work in the House of Commons is union, discipline, loyalty, subordination of isolated opinions and isolated aims to what is the common opinion and the common aim ; and working together I think we shall be able even in this Parliament to give a good account of ourselves.”

CHAPTER XXII

1899

IMPERIALISM

"Statesman, yet friend to truth ! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear."

POPE.

"Every war that is necessary is just ; and it is humanity to take up arms for the defence of a people to whom no other resource is left."—MACHIAVELLI.

"The arms are fair,
When the intent of bearing them is just "

SHAKESPEARE.

AT this time English politics were dominated by the great South African War, with which as a fact of history this book has nothing to do ; but it was the war in South Africa which developed and brought out still further those Imperial views which had always held so large a place in Henry Fowler's statesmanship.

It might have been thought that the son of Methodism, the man with a puritan cast of character, the man of peace in all departments of life, would have thrown in his lot with the so-called "Little Englanders," and denounced the war in unmeasured terms ; but it was not so. Henry Fowler was an Imperialist statesman, and his views and sentiments regarding this vexed question are best given in his own words. In November, 1899, he said :

"The question of peace or war admits of no middle course. There can be no compromise on that question. War is either just or unjust, necessary or unnecessary. I hold the opinion clearly that war—terrible, awful calamity that it is—unless it is an absolute necessity is a gigantic crime. Holding that opinion, I

could not vote for men or money—I would not spend a single shilling, I would not risk a single life, in the promotion of a war which I believed to be unjust. A man who enters upon war, and who proclaims that he does so with a light heart, proclaims that he has no heart at all, and that he wants the true spirit, or rather I may say, has lost the true spirit of manhood. . . . Speaking for myself only, I feel bound to say that I have arrived at a strong, clear and conscientious conviction, that the war in which we are at present engaged is a necessary war, and I therefore feel it to be my duty to support all measures for carrying on that war vigorously, and for bringing it to an end as speedily as possible. I regard this war as a defensive war. Not only while negotiations were pending, but while there was the possibility of an amicable settlement, war was declared against the British Crown in an Ultimatum, which I will say is unparalleled in the annals of diplomacy. Within a few hours of the delivery of that Ultimatum, the President of the South African Republic, and the President of the Orange Free State, invaded the territory, attacked the forces, and plunged the subjects of the British Crown into all the horrors of war. Our first duty, I take it, is to defend the dominions and the subjects of the Queen from foreign attack. The Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal are as much parts of the British territory as the counties of Cornwall or Kent, and what would our feelings be if those two great frontier counties were devastated by the armed forces of some hostile State; if large sections of those districts were annexed in insolent proclamation by a foreign Government; if the whole of our fellow-subjects were wrecked, their property confiscated, and they themselves exposed to all the cruelties and all the horrors which an invading army inevitably inflicted? I venture to assert that the nation, without distinction of party, or class, or creed, would unite as one man to resist, to repel, and to punish the invaders. That is our duty, and that to-day is the inflexible determination of the vast majority of the British people. We are Englishmen first, and Liberals and Conservatives after. Every other question, every other controversy, sink into absolute insignificance so long as the enemies of the Queen are in possession of one foot of her dominions. When British soil

is free from that dishonour, when that wanton aggression for which there was no justification has been driven back and defeated, then we can consider the many difficulties which this war has created, and we can discuss what will be the wisest and surest mode of securing the absolute supremacy of the Crown, with the complete civil and political equality of the British and Dutch populations who live together in South Africa. In the meantime we shall have to do all that we can to strengthen our forces, to supply their necessities, to mitigate their sufferings, and to protect the women and children whom they have left behind. We have also to trust implicitly in those distinguished Generals on whom has devolved the tremendous responsibility of maintaining and defending the honour of Great Britain and the existence of British rule in South Africa."

Again he said :

" We are defending the supremacy, the paramountcy, the predominance—I do not care what you call it as long as you retain the substance—of the British power in South Africa. And upon that supremacy depends the civil and political freedom of South Africa, the stability, the existence, of the British Empire in South Africa, and the honour and integrity of the British Empire throughout the world. There can be no permanent peace in South Africa until the question of equality of civil rights is settled. Two men riding a horse, one must ride first. That is a very simple but a very true allegory ; and there can be no permanent peace in South Africa till the question of the supremacy is settled. Upon this question of supremacy depends also our South African Empire, and if the Empire is lost, what will be the effect on our Colonial Empire ? What will be the effect on our Indian Empire if this nation abandons the power of protecting the right of the Queen's subjects in Africa ? She, at the same time, surrenders her claim to be regarded as a great Power. I do not fear that that catastrophe will happen. I think that the Englishman, the Scotsman, and the Irishman, supported as they have been by the great self-governing Colonies in all parts of the world, will do as their forefathers did a century ago, and as I believe their children still will do in generations which are yet to come,—maintain

untarnished and undiminished that great Empire which by Divine Providence has been committed to their charge."

In February, 1900, he repeated the same sentiments :

" Three months ago I stated in my opinion that the war was a just and necessary war. A great deal has been said and written since then on both sides of this hotly-contested question. I have not been an inattentive listener or reader, but I am here to-night to tell you that, reviewing my opinion in the light of those controversies, and also in the sometimes rather lurid light of subsequent events, I am strengthened in the conviction I then expressed, and to which I still adhere. That conviction to my mind rests on facts. My first fact is the unvarying hostile policy pursued by the Boers since 1881, their ceaseless attempts, in some cases successfully, to violate the conditions on which alone Mr. Gladstone's Government granted, and the House of Commons assented to, their independence. I refer also to the claims that were made, and which I think in a weak moment Lord Derby acceded to in 1884 ; to their constant diplomacy, with which every one of the governors, commissioners, and officials have been brought into contact, in order to effect, if possible, vital changes in the conditions on which their independence was granted. Also, to the creation of a well-developed and trained army, with the most powerful artillery, and possessing enormous stores and weapons with munitions, all of which were intended, and could have only been intended, to be used against the British Government. I know this accumulation of military resources is excused by some people on the ground of the Raid. You have pictured before you a vast British army sweeping down with all the panoply of war, upon a few Boers huddled together in their pastoral folds. . . . I at once admit that it was an act of criminal folly, but what did it amount to ? The entire force of raiders was under five hundred men, and the force that actually confronted them was fifteen hundred men all armed, and the Boers claimed compensation and charges in respect of assembling an army of upward of fifteen hundred armed men. I would not have a word said in extenuation of this folly, but to tell me that Kruger was frightened by it, or that he feared, with all their arms and munitions, for the

safety of the Transvaal, is to draw upon my imagination to an extent to which it will not respond. The best friend that Kruger has ever had was Jameson. That Raid has served the purpose, and well it has been used by the Oligarchy who wished to keep things as they were in the Transvaal.

“ Had the British Government, as I think they ought to have done, challenged the preparation of these armaments, and insisted, as they had a right to insist, upon knowing for what purpose these preparations were being made on their frontier, and declared them to be a standing menace, I don't think that even President Kruger would have had the audacity to allege those colossal defences were intended to guard against a renewal of such a fiasco as the Jameson Raid.

“ In addition to these facts we have the universal testimony of the residents in the Transvaal, and in other portions of South Africa in favour of the justification of the necessity of the present war. I attach special importance to the evidence of the ministers of religion, who have been for a long time, and are, resident in that locality. I repudiate the insinuations and the accusations that ministers of religion are the champions of war. Their devotion, their work, their self-sacrifice, their lives, prove to the contrary. They know the virtues and the vices of both the Dutch and the English. They know how the native races have been treated. They know what the general trend of feeling is in all grades of society. Their hopes, their machinations, their prepossessions are all in favour of peace. They are not capitalists, they have no axe of their own to grind. Their one object is a far higher and nobler aim ; and yet I must say, without an exception, with a unanimity which cannot be denied, and which has been rarely equalled, ministers of every Church, of every denomination, of the Church of England, of the Church of Rome, of the Churches of Scotland, of the Congregational Churches, who are emphatically the representatives and the heirs of the opinions of such men as Livingstone and Moffat, and of the Methodists, who have had missions in South Africa for nearly eighty years, and of the Baptists and all other denominations, all unite, as one man, in condemning, in deploring the necessity of this war, but allege that beyond

all doubt in their opinion it has been forced upon the British Government by a corrupt and tyrannical oligarchy. I will not only refer to the unanimity of opinion among ministers of religion, let us take other classes of the community—manufacturers, traders, residents, travellers, who have spent any time in the country, and I can only say that the general statement was that sooner or later this question of Dutch or British supremacy would have to be settled. Coupled with this public opinion in South Africa we must note the feeling of all our self-governing Colonies. Citizens of Canada, men who are familiar with two races, speaking two languages, professing two different religions, living together in peace and happiness and enjoying prosperity under British rule ; and not only of Canada, but of Australia and of New Zealand, men who know and value their colonial independence, and are attached to the British Empire because it is the guard and the guarantee of equal justice, and of civil, religious and political freedom. These independent, unprejudiced, self-governing communities have shown their loyalty to the Empire, not by eloquent words or by enthusiastic cheers, but by spontaneously sending forth thousands of their sons to fight and to die for their fatherland. They have shown, and we shall never forget it, that if a time of peril should ever come from stress or from storm to the British Empire, it can summon to its defence a vast army of men of every class and creed and clime, who are proud of their allegiance to the one Flag and the one Throne. My last fact was the actual invasion of British territory by the two Boer States, after they had refused the terms which their most ardent defenders in this country said they ought to accept, and after the British Government had offered in the despatch of the 22nd September 'to give a complete guarantee against any attack upon the independence of the South African Republic, either from within any part of the British dominions or from the territory of any foreign State.' I think such a guarantee, such a pledge, has rarely been given to any community. What was the answer to that pledge ? An Ultimatum which was alike an insult to the British Government and to the nation, followed in a few hours by an armed attack upon the territories of the Queen, and by the inflic-

tion of all the horrors of an hostile invasion upon her peaceful and loyal subjects in Natal. In the face of these facts—and I challenge either denial or refutation—I can come to no other conclusion than that this declaration of war was the culmination of a long-cherished design, and the furtherance of a policy which the British nation, unless it commits suicide, is bound to resist to the utmost degree. Now where was the responsibility for the war? I say the responsibility rests entirely on the head of President Kruger. He had peace in his hands on honourable terms and with independence guaranteed but ; he chose war.

“ The first condition of peace, the one on which all others depend, is the establishment of the supremacy of the Queen throughout South Africa. The history of the past, the sufferings and the sorrows of the present war, have produced in the mind of the people of Great Britain and of her Colonies an inflexible determination that so far as is humanly possible, the dominions of the Queen and the subjects of the Queen, shall be effectually guarded against any repetition of the invasion which has desolated and is desolating South Africa. On this condition, I believe the decision of the Parliament and the people to be absolutely final. The second condition is equal rights, civil, political and religious, for all white men in South Africa. Thirdly, self-government on the widest basis, with the fullest recognition of local circumstances and obliterating as rapidly as possible past rivalries and conflicts. Fourthly, provisions to secure the just and humane treatment of the native races. There was a time when some people were in favour of the abandonment of the Colonies and foreign possessions, but that school has had its day. The determination to-day is to uphold our Colonies and to draw them nearer to us. There are friends of mine who think that those who value the existence of a united Empire are Jingoës, are fond of militarism and are not true to the old Liberalism. They do not like the word Empire. They say it suggests tyranny, bloodshed, cruelty and crime. But Empire has no monopoly of these sad associations. I could mention Monarchies and Republics which would arouse similar memories. When we think of the British Empire we are not thinking of the Empire of the Cæsars or of Napoleon.

The word Empire suggests to us the strength, the unity, the freedom, the material, social and moral progress of a vast federation of free men, cemented by the traditions of a glorious past, and by the common hopes of a still more glorious future. We do not forget what the British Empire has done for the world, and we are not citizens of this Empire grudgingly or of necessity. We are proud of our birthright. We acknowledge our responsibilities as a vast inheritance which we will not dishonour or abandon. And when I am told that we are not true to the older Liberalism I deny the charge. I say that as Liberals we claim a share, and it has been no small share, in the federation with our Colonies, in the development of our Imperial policy, in the knitting together of races as varied as their languages, and as diverse as their creeds

" You ask me for my precedent and my authority for saying these were the sentiments of the older school of Liberals, and I will quote you one extract from a speech by our last great leader, Mr. Gladstone. He said : ' I believe we are all united—indeed, it would be most unnatural if we were not—in a fond attachment, perhaps in something of a proud attachment, to the great country to which we belong—to this great Empire, which has committed to it a trust and a function given from God, as special and remarkable as ever was entrusted to any portion of the family of man. When I speak of that trust and that function I feel that words fail me. I cannot tell you what I think of the nobleness of the inheritance that has descended upon us, of the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it. I will not endeavour to make it a part of controversial politics. It is a part of my being, of my flesh and blood, of my heart and soul. For these ends have I laboured through my youth and manhood till my hairs are grey. In that faith and practice I have lived ; in that faith and practice I will die.' This is my confession of faith as a Liberal Imperialist. That is the Liberalism in which I believe, to which I have steadily adhered as long as you have given me the power to represent you in the Imperial Parliament, and from which I will never flinch or recede so long as you maintain me in that proud position."

In January, 1901, when the war was gradually drawing to a close, Henry Fowler spoke in high terms of praise of a phrase in the

Address which the burghers in the Orange River Colony had issued to their brethren in South Africa, with a view to promoting the restoration of peace. " One sentence of the Address threw a clear and significant light on one of the controversies and perplexities which had prevailed for some time with regard to the origin of the war: ' We have fought to get South Africa under one Flag.' There was no talk there about franchise, of independence, of capitalists, of the Uitlanders. They had hit the right nail on the head. They had recorded the truth and were honourable men. They had been fighting to get South Africa under one flag, and England had been doing the same. That fight was inevitable. No diplomacy could have prevented it. The contest was bound to come sooner or later. Our position, however, in the matter was clear. We were fighting for South Africa to be under one flag and that flag was the Union Jack. Why were we fighting for it to be under the flag of Great Britain? Because it was a part of Great Britain. It belonged to Great Britain by the most valid titles by which a country could be acquired. We acquired it by conquest, we acquired it by treaty, and we acquired it by purchase; and we had strengthened and maintained it in the manner in which Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotchmen were accustomed to spend their lives—in developing its commerce and capacities. English capital, English blood and brains had been combined in making South Africa what it was to-day. We could not let any body of men snatch our Empire away. Those brave Boers said: ' We have fought to get South Africa under one flag; we have done our best and we have lost.' Nobody could utter anything of a sneering or derogatory character to brave men who confessed when they were beaten.

" But in quoting that sentence we have to recognize, and we want the Empire and the Boers to recognize it, that the people and Parliament of this country have decided that this shall be a fight to the finish. We have made up our minds that the British Flag shall be hoisted, shall be protected, and defended. We have also made up our minds that when that contest is over, all the races in South Africa, be they Briton, Boer or Native, shall enjoy those rights and privileges, that equity before the law, and equity

in all other respects, which has been the privilege and the right of all the subjects of the British Crown in every part of the world. Sooner or later, and the sooner the better, we mean that those great people shall be endowed amply with those institutions of self-government, that freedom of management of their own affairs, which has redounded to the happiness of the various British Colonies, and which has not only benefited the people, but also strengthened in their hour of need the whole of the British Empire. We are not ashamed of what our country has done, for we know that no people who have been put under British sway have had cause to regret it. They have been more prosperous and better citizens for being subject to the British Throne than they could have been under any Throne or mode of Government. While at different periods there has been war, the victories of the century just passed have been the victories of peace to a far wider and happier extent than the victories of war."

The great political action which formed the Liberal League at the beginning of 1902 was perhaps nearer to Henry Fowler's heart than any development since the great split of the party in 1886. It embodied the principles of Liberalism to which he had always been an avowed adherent, and it had at its head, in Lord Rosebery, a Liberal leader who fulfilled my father's personal ideal of Liberal leadership, perhaps more than any other man with whom he had been brought into contact, and who claimed from him a personal devotion which he never bestowed upon any other. In the Liberal League he hoped again for the formation of a great Imperial party, and he looked forward to the restoration of some of the years which the locust had eaten, under a man who was brilliant, and able, and inspiring, and young.

My father was one of the three Vice-Presidents of the Liberal League and signed the first manifesto of that organization issued on 2nd May, 1902. No section of the Liberal party was more active during the four years from 1902 to 1906, and none was exposed to more severe criticism than was the Liberal League during this period.

Early in December, 1901, Lord Rosebery made his famous speech at Chesterfield, protesting against the policy of the Unionist

Government in South Africa, suggesting the lines upon which peace might be attained, and indicating to the Liberal party how they might regain the confidence of the country. There was at this time an active group of Liberals in existence, comprising upwards of three hundred of the younger members of the party, known as the Imperial Liberal Council. This association formed the basis of the larger or better-known "Liberal League" of which Lord Rosebery became President. The three first Vice-Presidents were Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, and my father. They were subsequently joined by Lord Haldane. Sir Robert Perks was the Treasurer. The Hon. Secretaries were Mr. I. M. Paulton, Mr. Freeman Thomas (now Lord Willingdon), and later the Earl of Arran. Mr. Allard, one of the most experienced of the Liberal Agents, resigned his position as Secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Association, and joined the Liberal League. The following extracts from the League's programme illustrate its aims :

"The League seeks to prove that no party has a monopoly of the larger patriotism which includes the whole Empire in its scope. Signs have not been wanting that misunderstandings are current on this matter both within and without the United Kingdom.

"The League insists upon the paramount necessity of maintaining the Naval supremacy essential to the security of the Empire and of the commerce upon which the life of these islands depends."

"National efficiency and Imperial responsibility are inseparably bound up with domestic policy. The League does not prescribe any programme, for it holds that the cause of Liberalism is better served by concentration on practical reforms than by the enumeration of multitudinous proposals which there is no power to carry into effect. But in its judgment the most vital problems at this juncture are those which concern Education, Temperance, and the Housing of the People."

"With regard to Ireland the League is opposed to such a counsel of despair as the grant of an independent Irish Parliament or of anything that would lead up to it."

Lord Rosebery threw himself with extraordinary vigour into

the work of the League. During the four years prior to the Election of 1906, he delivered important speeches to vast audiences in Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Plymouth, Trowbridge, Lincoln, Stourbridge, Truro, Bodmin, and frequently in London—he was during this period ably seconded by the four Vice-Presidents. They were, of course, attacked for so doing by prominent members of the Liberal party. My father's first public deliverance upon the policy of the Liberal League was in a letter to the Chairman of the East Wolverhampton Liberal Association on 5th May, 1902 :

“ May 5th, 1902.

“ DEAR MR. JAMES,

“ I greatly value your kind expressions of confidence in and approval of my political attitude. While I recognize that there are diversities of opinion in our party on some questions I believe that these differences are exaggerated both by our political opponents and by those (happily few in number) who desire to accentuate rather than allay our present difficulties.

“ At the meeting in South Wolverhampton, which was addressed by Mr. Asquith, I expressed my confidence in the wisdom and statesmanship of Lord Rosebery, and my acceptance of the principles set forth by him in his speech at Chesterfield.

“ The overwhelming majority of the Liberal party accepted the war policy and the peace policy of that speech. The ‘ supreme tribunal of public opinion and of common sense,’ to which Lord Rosebery appealed, has already decided that while it is in the interest of Boer and Briton alike that the war should be prosecuted as vigorously as possible to a successful termination, it is our duty and our desire ‘ to bind, to heal, and not to keep open the mortal wound which is being caused by this war.’

“ Lord Rosebery's speeches at Liverpool and Glasgow developed the domestic policy which was foreshadowed at Chesterfield, but it would be foolish to ignore that controversy

has arisen as to his opinions on one question of vital importance. I think that it was incumbent upon Lord Rosebery to 'speak his mind' on the Irish question, and I also believe that the time has arrived when the Liberal party ought clearly to define its attitude with respect to the Government of Ireland. I therefore comply with your suggestion that I should state my own views.

"It appears to me that three divergent policies are at the present time advocated by prominent members of the Liberal party :

"(a) The first policy is that of unshaken, loyal, uncompromising adherence to the Home Rule of 1886, and 1893, as the cardinal article of the Liberal faith and the infallible test of Liberal orthodoxy. This policy is outspoken, straight-forward and clear. The ardent enthusiasm and chivalrous courage of its adherents command our respect and our admiration. I believe that its adoption would mean the arrest of Liberal progress and the abandonment of Liberal legislation for a generation, and I fear that it would involve the disruption, if not the destruction of the Liberal party. *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*

"(b) An influential section of the Liberal party, while asserting that the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893 are dead, maintain that the principles they embodied are alive ; that those principles are the only solution of the Irish difficulty, and the only alternative to disloyalty, coercion and the sad consequences which follow. The advocates of this policy declare that any attempt to adopt it must be postponed to some uncertain future when a new scheme (that the matchless genius of Mr. Gladstone could not devise) will be approved by the electorate of Great Britain.

"I venture to think that this course of procedure is not practical politics. You cannot shift a great constitutional change backwards and forwards to suit party convenience. If the Liberal party in its relations to Home Rule is in 1902 where it was in 1886 and 1892, it must follow the precedents of 1886 and 1892, and put the first question in the first place.

After a sixteen years' conflict you cannot convert the issue on which that conflict was fought into a pious opinion to be adopted or postponed at pleasure.

“(c) Another section of Liberals recognize that political leaders and parties must have regard to what is possible in attempting legislation of vast importance, and always remember that such legislation cannot be carried without the support of a preponderating public opinion. They reasonably ask whether the position of 1902 with respect to the Irish question is what it was in 1892, or whether anything has happened since 1895 which demands a reconsideration of that position? There are facts recorded in the history of the last seven years which have seriously affected and will in the future affect, not only the attitude of the Liberal party but also the public opinion of this country, with respect to Ireland and its government.

“Mr. Gladstone's proposals were subject to the indispensable condition that any Irish legislature must be a subordinate one, and that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament must be absolutely maintained. This condition has been repudiated by the Irish party, not only in platform speeches, but officially by motions made and voted for by them in the House of Commons.

“Mr. John Redmond in the Debate on the Address in February, 1898, moved an amendment declaring that the demand of the Irish people for national self-government was the most urgent of all subjects of domestic policy, and that that demand could only be met by the concession of an independent Parliament and an Executive for all affairs distinctly Irish.

“Sir William Harcourt, the then leader of the Opposition, at once stated his view of Mr. Redmond's new departure and said :

“‘I come to his (Mr. Redmond's) fundamental condition, and that is that the demand can be satisfied only by the concession of an independent Parliament for all affairs distinctly Irish. What the hon. and learned Member asks me

to do is to condemn and repudiate all the principles of Home Rule, on which the British party on these benches at least, with the consent of the leaders of the Irish party on two successive occasions—1886 and 1893—have founded a measure of Home Rule, and that principle was, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Now, Sir, that has always been, and has always been stated to be, so, by our great leader, for whose conduct and sacrifices the hon. and learned Member for Waterford, I am bound to say, has shown very little consideration.

“ ‘ Let me point out how capital and fundamental has been the question of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. It was specifically reserved in the preamble of the Bill of 1893. Mr. Gladstone always maintained that it was inherent in the nature of the Constitution ; but when suspicion and doubts were raised upon that subject he expressed his readiness to make it distinct, and when my right hon. and learned friend, Sir Henry James—now Lord James of Hereford—brought forward a clause specifically stating and reserving the authority of the Imperial Parliament in these words :

“ ‘ “ The supreme power and authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things within the Queen’s dominions,” that was accepted, and accepted with the consent of the Irish Members.

“ ‘ Therefore I say that the fundamental principle in the Home Rule Bill, which we, who took part in that measure, and were responsible for it, always asserted, that the Members of the Liberal party who supported it—all those who, at any time, have recommended its adoption—was the principle of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament.

“ ‘ What is meant by an independent Parliament? The seconder of the Resolution had no doubt in his mind as to what is meant by an independent Parliament of a nation which is prepared to employ force to achieve its purpose.

“ ‘ But, Sir, the principles which were declared by Mr. Gladstone are the principles to which we adhere. Those are the principles which are put in issue, and are contradicted

by this resolution, and I can only inform the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that against that resolution I, for one, will vote.'

"The Irish party, including Mr. Dillon, unanimously voted for this motion, together with three Members of the Liberal party, namely, Messrs. Labouchere, Atherley Jones and Scott.

"In February, 1899, Mr. Redmond proposed a resolution to the same effect, and in his speech he defined his views of an independent Irish Parliament as a 'Parliament in which there should be no veto, except the veto of the Crown, which should be exercised there as in England, on constitutional principles and in conformity with the wishes of the Irish Ministers of the Sovereign.'

"Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, as leader of the Opposition, opposed and with the Liberal party voted against the motion. The motion was supported by the same three Liberal Members with the addition of Mr. Stanhope.

"Another fact of far-reaching importance is the enactment of the Irish Local Government Act of 1898. In the debate on Mr. Redmond's motion of 1899, he censured me for having said in a speech to my constituents that 'In my opinion the constituencies of Great Britain would require that this Act should be fully, fairly and completely tried, before they would reconsider the question of any change in the government of Ireland.'

"Mr. Redmond has recently described this Act as the most important statute for Ireland passed in the nineteenth century. He declared that the Irish Local Government Act was a 'Revolution,' and he added: 'It abolished at one stroke all the powers and privileges of the ascendancy class in Ireland, and put that power into the hands of the people. The Irish people have at last attained real power.'

"While I agree with Mr. Redmond in his description of the Act, I frankly admit that it is fettered with restrictions which have limited the control of the Irish Local Authorities in a manner in which those Authorities are not restricted in

England or Scotland, and that the operation of that Act will not have fair play, until the Irish Local Authorities are put on the same footing, and invested with the same powers in all respects, which the English and Scotch Local Authorities possess.

"That measure did not settle the Irish question. There still remains the question of land purchase with which Parliament, and Parliament alone, can, and must, deal. There must be a devolution to Local Authorities of that local business which weighs heavily on the overburdened House of Commons, and which would be far better dealt with by Local Authorities.

"The centralized administration of Dublin Castle must be reformed, and to Ireland as well as to England, Scotland and Wales must be delegated extended powers of local control of local affairs.

"Irrespective of these changes in the situation since 1895, the question arises whether there are indications of any growth of public opinion in favour of the demand for an Irish legislature. At the General Election of 1895, out of the 567 Members representing Great Britain, 390 Members were returned as opponents as against 177 supporters, showing a majority of 213. The election of 1900 returned 381 opponents and 186 supporters, showing a majority of 195. It is not for me to anticipate the effect of the hostile attitude of the Irish National party to Great Britain in the present war upon a future election, but I believe that attitude has aroused a feeling of indignation and distrust in all classes of the British people, which will not soon be forgotten.

"The recognition of the facts which I have mentioned brings us face to face with Lord Rosebery's Irish policy. He declares that he will support 'nothing in the shape of an independent Parliament sitting in Dublin or anything that may lead up to it—and that at the very heart of the Empire we cannot afford a dualism of Parliament and Government.' Subject to this he believes that upon the foundation of the County Government, already created in Ireland, there may be built a superstructure of Local Government in Ireland

guided by Irish ideas—that the present central administration of Irish government must be drastically reformed—and that there must be a devolution, both to Ireland and to Scotland, of those local affairs which are at present occupying the time of, and embarrassing the Imperial Parliament, without dealing efficiently with the needs of both Ireland and Scotland. Lord Rosebery declares his opinion that, in whatever way the Irish question may be hereafter dealt with, it must be achieved by the concurrence and patriotism of both political parties.

“ I adopt the policy of Lord Rosebery—I believe it to be the only practical policy. I believe it will conduce to the interest of Ireland, that it will lead to the development of its resources and the prosperity of its people, and that it will abolish the evils which have been created by the blunders of the miserable misgovernment of which Ireland has been the victim.

“ A few weeks ago a Liberal Member of Parliament stated that the most pressing legislative problems were those of Education, Temperance, Housing and Rating. How gravely has the situation changed since that article was written ! The Government have proposed a financial scheme which rekindles the fires of the controversy which abolished the Corn Laws, and they have introduced an Education Bill which destroys the settlement of 1870. The primary duty of the Liberal party at the present time is to defend Free Trade, and to maintain the principle that the grants of public money shall be effectively controlled by public authorities, representing those from whom that money is levied.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

This gave my father's views at that date with respect to Home Rule. During the war he had been at variance with many of the Irish owing to their avowed enthusiasm in support of the enemy, and on one occasion he said in exasperation to a member of the Opposition : “ The Irish are not content with having killed Home Rule, they can't stop driving nails into the coffin.” He

did not, however, then reckon with the feline number of lives which that question seems to possess.

On 31st July, 1902, the Liberal League held its first annual meeting, followed by a dinner at the Hotel Cecil, over which Lord Rosebery presided. Upwards of one hundred and twenty Members of Parliament and Liberal candidates were present. Speaking at this great gathering of more than one thousand Liberals, Sir Henry Fowler said :

“ I am in hearty unison with every word that Lord Rosebery and Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey have said with reference to the position, the duty and the responsibilities of the Liberal League. But my duty and my pleasure to-night is to ask you to recognize your President, and to return to him the good wishes which he has expressed to the Liberal League, over whose destinies he presides. I am not going to say a word about Lord Rosebery's illustrious past. I must say that our present position—I do not mean as a party, as a league, a section of the party, but as a nation—our present position with reference to the termination of the war is, in my humble judgment, owing in no small degree to the attitude which Lord Rosebery took up at the commencement of the war. When he put patriotism above party in his conduct during the war, supporting its vigorous prosecution until its legitimate ends were reached, and censuring, as he had the courage to do at a critical time, the inefficiency of the preparations which the Government had made for the war, and the manner in which they were carrying it out, he rendered the greatest service to his country. But what has been well described as the charter of peace for South Africa was the Chesterfield speech. That speech told Europe that the British nation was at one upon certain vital points, and that until these vital points were obtained the war must go on. That speech told the people of Great Britain, and told the people of South Africa, that once these objects were attained an honourable and a liberal peace would be readily accorded by Great Britain to their antagonist in that war. The suggestions which were then made, the policy which was then indicated, the generous proposals which were then suggested to those who had been our foes—these were anticipatory of the

terms upon which peace was secured, a peace which I believe will result in a permanent settlement to the interest alike of the Boer and the Briton. But we have to recognize also the interest that Lord Rosebery has taken in home politics, the interest that he has taken in the revivification and restoration of the Liberal party, of its responsibilities, of its duties, and of its possibilities ; and we have also to remember that his declarations of policy as to education, as to temperance, as to housing of the poor, as to the efficiency, or rather the inefficiency, of a great part of our public service, and as to Ireland, have struck a note to which the vast majority of the Liberal party have cordially responded. His great speeches at Chesterfield, Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds, in London and here to-night, demonstrate beyond argument, beyond dispute, his position, his responsibilities, and his intention. I will only add what I know, and what my colleagues know, the unflagging attention, the unremitting zeal with which he has supervised every detail both of the formation and the hard work of this Liberal League."

There has existed an impression, fostered by the members of the Opposition, as well as by the critics among Liberals themselves of the Liberal League, that those distinguished men who were its Vice-Presidents, as well as a large number of its other members who entered the next Government, had, by so doing, turned their back a little on their President, and transferred their allegiance to the new Prime Minister. That this was not so—that not only the Liberal Leaguers themselves, but also such men as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, were not only willing, but longing, to welcome Lord Rosebery back into the forefront of Liberalism in its coming triumph, is shown by the private letter which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman wrote to my father shortly after the delivery of the great Chesterfield speech :

" Lord Warden Hotel,

" Dover,

" 7th January, 1902.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" You will have seen all manner of stories in the papers as to my interview with Rosebery a short time ago,

in which the inventive genius of the pressmen revelled. The most of them I need not say were false—none of them had any authority from me.

“What occurred was very simple. Passing through town on my way, as I thought, abroad, I thought it highly expedient to find out whether the Chesterfield speech had made, or rather indicated, the change in his attitude which the public imagined it had, and which for one I should have rejoiced at.

“I renewed to him the assurances often before given, of desire to see him back in the party, and the hope that that was the real drift of his ideas. He said that it was impossible; he had left the party five years ago; and the one question of Ireland was enough to prevent his rejoining, because he is now opposed to any form of Home Rule.

“He assented to my opinion that on the question of peace and settlement in South Africa there was no essential difference between us, but he declined to come into consultation even on this, because he is not, as he said, ‘in communion’ with us.

“This was to my mind a melancholy result, and it involved a disappointment to the general feeling of the country which read into his speech a desire for united action.

“We discussed the whole political situation, and there was no hurry or scamping, as is alleged by the professing eavesdroppers.

“I thought it right to let you know these actual facts—and I very much regret the drift of them.

“Yours always,

“H. C.-B.”

To which my father replied:

“Woodthorne,

“Wolverhampton,

“10th January, 1902.

“MY DEAR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,

“I have been away from home and did not return until last night, or I should have replied earlier to your letter, for which I am greatly obliged.

" I read the newspaper stories about your interview with R., but experience and common sense convinced me that they were fictitious and unauthorized—I might add ridiculous.

" The course you took appears to me to have been the proper one, and I would still hope that there is no inseparable difficulty in uniting the party on the South African question. The views of Lord R. and yourself, as I understand them, do not conflict on what I may call the vital points—the divergencies of peace and the subsequent settlement relate to details which at all events are fair subjects of friendly discussion. I have not seen or heard from R. since you saw him, but the main obstacle is Home Rule.

" I assume that on social legislation, Education, Temperance, Housing, Taxation, etc., there is no difference. There can be no doubt that (quite irrespective of any view of R.) Ireland is the gravest difficulty of the Liberal party, and that it will very soon have to be faced as a practical question. Looking at it in that light and without disputing the policy of 1886 and 1893, there appear five facts that have taken place since 1894 which have completely altered the situation, and which do, and will, most powerfully affect the action of public opinion.

" 1. Mr. Gladstone's fundamental principle that any Irish legislation must be subordinate, and that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained (a principle which Parnell accepted as part of a final settlement) has been openly abandoned by the Irish party, not only in speeches, but on two distinct motions made by them in the House of Commons, and affirmed by them in two divisions.

" During the campaign from 1886 to 1892, in the many speeches I made in favour of Home Rule, I declared both to my constituents and to the country, that I would not support any scheme of Home Rule, which in the slightest degree impaired the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and when Henry James proposed to insert in the Bill of 1893 a clause affirming the continued supremacy which Morley opposed, I wrote to Mr G., stating that, having regard to my speeches

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and my pledges to my constituents, I could not vote against James's amendment (a step which of course must have involved my resignation), Mr. G. replied to me, expressing his decision to accept the amendment.

" In connection with vital departure from the agreement with the Irish party, on which the Bill of 1893 was founded and fought, I should add the subsequent disclosure of Parnell's absolute indifference to truth, wherever policy dictated that course, and the revelations that neither he, nor personal followers, nor the Irish party, have ever regarded any settlement as final until they have secured absolute independence.

" 2. The rejection of Mr. G.'s scheme by the House of Lords was in 1895, approved by a larger majority in the constituencies than the rejection in 1886. I think George Russell says in a review of Herbert Paul's *Life of Mr. G.*, that not a single public meeting was held in England or Scotland protesting against the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, and although the election of 1900 did not turn on Home Rule, yet the 403 members who constitute the majority are, to a man, opposed to Home Rule.

" 3. The Irish party have in the most insulting and offensive manner dissolved their political connection with the Liberal party.

" 4. The Irish party, by their hostility to the people of Great Britain in the war, have alienated the sympathy which the past history of Ireland had created in a large section of the Liberal party, and aroused a feeling of indignation and distrust in all sections of the people.

" 5. Until a considerable majority of the electors of Great Britain are in favour of Home Rule, its enactment is a practical impossibility.

" These five facts (not arguments) indicate to me, and I feel sure to a majority of the 185 Liberal Members, that all Liberal reforms—social, financial, administrative and philanthropic, ought not to be indefinitely postponed and a Tory Government permanently installed in office while our party is condemned to the task of Sisypheus.

"The inexorable logic of these facts leads to the inevitable conclusion that Home Rule, whether it be wise or unwise, is outside all practical politics.

"I was sorry to see that you had a cold—hope you are better.

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

In a speech at the National Liberal Club about this time, my father said: "I won't say I am not a Jingo because nobody knows what Jingo means, and there are no Jingoers. I will not say I am not a Little Englander, because nobody knows what Little Englander means, and there are no Little Englanders. But I will use language that can be understood of the common people. I am opposed to the foreign policy of Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett and I am opposed to the foreign policy of Mr. Labouchere. I am opposed to both these foreign policies on precisely the same ground—namely, the interest of peace. I believe that either the one policy or the other, if ever adopted by this country—which God forbid—will lead the country into war. An aggressive England would be a menace to all the other Powers of Europe, and we know what that means; a weak, pusillanimous England would be unable to maintain—nay, unable to defend—the very existence of the Empire itself."

Just before the General Election of 1906 he also declared that "he was not going to underrate the other sections and organizations of the party, but he believed not the least of the causes, which had combined to make the party more united at the present day than at any time in the last twenty years, was the action and the work of the Liberal League. I am an Imperialist in the truest sense of the word. I am an Imperialist because I am proud to be a citizen of what I believe is the greatest Empire the world has ever seen—an Empire whose reign has been the symbol of freedom, of justice, of civilization and of progress."

"Sir Henry Fowler," writes one of the members of that League, "diligently attended the Committees of the Liberal League over which Lord Rosebery almost invariably presided. At the election

of 1906 about eighty members of the League offered themselves as candidates. Between sixty and seventy were elected. The four Vice-Presidents of the League entered the Cabinet, Lord Beauchamp entered the Ministry. Mr. Hudson Kearley, now Lord Devonport, became Under-Secretary of the Board of Trade. Mr. Emmott was appointed Chairman of Committees. Sir J. Lawson Walton became Attorney-General, and Sir William Robson, Solicitor-General. Several subordinate places in the Government were also given to Liberal Leaguers. Among the members of the League who subsequently entered the Government were Sir Rufus Isaacs, Mr. H. J. Tennant, Mr. John Fuller and Mr. Edwin Montagu.

“With the great victory of the Liberal party in 1906, to which they so powerfully contributed, the Liberal League attained its zenith. Its position during the four years following, right up to its dissolution in 1910, was one of considerable difficulty.

“The League, with Lord Rosebery as its President, its inspiring genius to the last, was too loyal to Liberalism to play the part of a critic; it was too experienced in political history to become a tool.”

CHAPTER XXIII

1906

THE FLOW OF THE TIDE

"Winning should put any man into courage."—SHAKESPEARE.

"How chances mock
And changes fill the cup of alteration."

SHAKESPEARE

AT this time the great waterspout of Tariff Reform whirled up out of the ocean of practical politics. Henry Fowler's opposition to this was fixed from the first.

At the meeting of the Bristol Anchor Society, at which he was guest, he said. "Mr. Balfour and his colleagues are in an atmosphere of doubt. Mr. Chamberlain is not; he knows his own mind. His plan is a real plan. It means something, and he does not pretend to hide it under any other disguise. Mr. Chamberlain tells you not only what this thing is—what his scheme is—but how he proposes to work it out, and therefore we are not in any fog. We may have doubts as to his history—we may have doubts as to his arithmetic—but he leaves you in no doubt as to the meaning of what he aims at, and depend upon it he will go there; and if he cannot go by one road he will go by another. He proposes to begin with a duty of two shillings a quarter on all foreign corn. That means not only on wheat, but upon barley, oats, rice, and every other production which was classified under the Act of ~~two~~ years ago in the Schedule as falling within the word 'Corn,' except the one article of maize, which he proposes to exclude. Every other description of corn is to be taxed, and he exempts from that tax the corn which comes from our own possessions

throughout the world. He has not said so, but I presume he means India; of course he means the Colonies and the whole range of the British possessions. That is a very intelligible taxation. It is the first step towards re-enacting the Corn Laws. I find that the next proposal is five per cent. on foreign meat and dairy produce, but there is no exemption there, except a possible one on colonial wine and fruits. Those stand by themselves as articles of food, and raise no question of raw material. Then he asks for ten per cent. on the average of all manufactured goods, and there are no exemptions. As I understand it, whether those manufactured goods come from the Colonies or from India, they are to be subject to duty. Let us try to realize, as practical men of business, what this proposal means. Sir Robert Peel, in 1842, at the commencement of his great fiscal reform, which, even Mr. Chamberlain admitted, led to a succession of prosperous years, wiped out of the duty-paying category seven hundred and forty-four different articles, and Mr. Gladstone completed Sir Robert Peel's great enterprise in 1860 by taking the duties off three hundred and seventy-one other articles, leaving now only some five or six articles subject to Customs duty, such as spirits, sugar, tobacco, tea and wines. Now ask yourselves, what that will involve in levying, and classifying, and in preventing smuggling? Is all this vast array of new articles which are taken on to our shores at all hours of the day and night, from all parts of the world, to come through the Custom House, and to be passed by the Custom House before they can be free? The extra cost will not be ten per cent. A man who has to pay an advance of ten per cent. will want to be paid for doing that. There will be a large number of vital things required to handle this procedure, and it is a very erroneous calculation to suppose that the additional cost will be limited to ten per cent. That may be a small sum, but where you are dealing with large matters such as tens and hundreds of thousands, ten per cent. is a large sum, and that money will have to be paid in cash to the Custom House before those goods are distributed through the length and breadth of the land. Whether it be upon the food, or upon the raw material, or upon the manufactured goods, you must remember that it is a blow at the

consumer of these articles. If you put a tax on corn, say of ten shillings or five shillings a quarter, or whatever it is, it will raise the price all round.

"It has been shown beyond demonstration that the difference between the market price of any goods and of the duty is always to be paid by the consumer, and paid in respect of the whole of the home production as well as upon foreign imports. I am not going to trouble you with the figures to-night. I only recall to you the letter in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose straightforward courage and loyal adherence to the principles of Free Trade demand, and receive, the grateful recognition of all his fellow-countrymen, said that the country to receive the eight or nine millions that would accrue from the new policy would have to pay fifteen millions. This policy was a policy which would make the poor poorer. You are to raise the price of food in this country, you are to raise the price of manufactured articles, you at the same time increase the cost to every consumer, and that falls with the heaviest pressure upon the poorest of the poor. What are you going to gain by that? It is a chance and I think a very uncertain chance. All that I can see that can be gained by it is,—the making of the rich richer. I object to the taxation of bread, because it is the prime article of subsistence. Let the working men remember that it will be their doing if ever taxation is put upon the bread of this country. I will resist it to the utmost. To tell me that cheaper tea or cheaper tobacco will ever be an equivalent of dearer bread, is to mock my intelligent powers. Wages may be raised, but they will be raised by the action and power of Trades Unions. But what about the artisans who do not belong to Trades Unions—three hundred thousand railway men employed in this country, the employees of the Government, the small tradesmen, the clerks, the struggling professional men, the ministers of all religions, the people with fixed incomes, the widows and the orphans? This legislation will raise the cost of ~~living~~ to every member of those classes. The struggle of the heaviest taxed class would be intensified beyond expression, there would be only two industries created, one of which is very limited at the present, and the other does not exist. You would

have a great addition to the Custom House officials and to smugglers. I am not anxious to increase either the one or the other. Let me remind you of the words of Mr. Villiers on the occasion of the jubilee of Free Trade. 'To you, and to those who share your convictions, it remains as a sacred duty to secure that the millions of electors in this country are not seduced in the future from their allegiance to Free Trade, which would assuredly result in a condition more disastrous to multiplied millions than ever was experienced in the evil days of Protection. Of such a result I have no fear, and in the words of Sir Robert Peel I say that it is my consolation that never will the Corn Laws be again revived in England.' Within six years of the date of that letter the country is asked to re-impose the Corn Laws, to abandon Free Trade, to restore Protection. I cannot, and do not, believe that that attempt will succeed. I will do my utmost to avert so great a disaster, so great a catastrophe."

Speaking at Glasgow on the same subject he said: "One principle we mean to adhere to is that taxation, not levied for revenue purposes, is taxation levied in the interests of the protected class. All taxes should be paid into revenue, and no taxes should be levied for any personal advantage, whether it be of selected individuals, or of selected trades, or of selected interests. You have no right to take a man's money from him in the shape of taxation except for the public benefit. No man can be a Free Trader who does not hold that cardinal doctrine; there is no room for dissent or qualification from that absolutely elementary foundation principle of Free Trade.

* * * * *

"We are Free Traders from pure selfishness. There is no sentimental love of, or philanthropic generosity to, other nations. There is no 'Little Englander' desire to put money into the pockets of our rivals. We are Free Traders because we believe it to be the best for the interests of all classes, and for the interest of the nation as a whole. When we are told that that was not the doctrine of the original great Free Traders, and they accepted the principle of Free Trade upon the faith of its adoption by other

nations, that is a mis-statement, there is no foundation for it. Sir Robert Peel laid down the doctrine that Free Trade and the modification of the Tariff were made entirely in the interest of the people of Great Britain and no one else, and Cobden also said : ' If Free Trade be a good thing for us we will have it. Let other nations take it if it be a good thing for them ; if it be not, let them do without it.'

* * * * *

" Every man is a Free Trader except in his own trade, and, when you can get it, Protection is a very nice thing If you can have a very comfortable addition put on to the prices at which you are selling it is not human nature to object to it. But what legislators have to do, and what the people who elect legislators have to do, is to regard the general interests of the consumers and not the producers "

Controverting the assertion that we were threatened with the loss of our Colonies if we did not adopt Tariff Reform, he asked : " What is the evidence of that ? What is the history of the last three years ?

" If there is one thing of which this nation is proud, it is during the last two or three years the voluntary, noble, generous, self-sacrificing manner with which the Colonies came to the help of the Mother Country. And what we were led to believe then, and what we believe now, is that if ever a day of stress and storm should come to the Mother Country, if ever she was to be put with her back to the wall, her Colonies would come forth to help her. They want no bribe. They poured out their treasure like water, they shed their blood on behalf of that Empire of which they are proud to be constituent members. They asked nothing from us ; they are not prepared to entertain the only possible proposition, not that I am advocating that for a moment, which would be a Zollverein or Free Trade among all the members of the Empire. No, no ; they will manage their own business their own way. They will have the control of their own homes, and our business is to be as friendly with them as possible, and to recognize in every shape and form their interest. It is not doing a

service to the Colonies ; it is not doing a service to the Mother Country to introduce such an element of discord—to say that we are to put a tax upon the food of the people of this country for the benefit of the Colonies, which tax the Colony is not to pay.”

The year 1903 was an eventful one in Henry Fowler's home life. Both his daughters were married, the elder on April 16th to Mr. Alfred Felkin, and the younger on July 23rd to the Rev. Robert Hamilton. In the preceding March he referred to these events in a letter to Lord Morley: “The atmosphere here is a joyous one, but, as you may suppose, it depresses me, though I must keep up for the sake of others.”

The following year he wrote :

‘ Woodthorne,

“ Wolverhampton,

“ October 3rd, 1904. ’

“ MY DEAR MORLEY,

“ I duly forwarded your note to Mrs. Felkin.

‘ We returned home on Friday last after a very pleasant holiday spent at Skibo, Cromer and Hunstanton and hope and believe that we are both better for the change.

“ We were shocked yesterday to hear about Harcourt. I thought him very much changed at the end of the season, but did not anticipate that the end was so near. I gather from the newspapers that ‘The weary wheels of life stood still,’ and that his death was alike painless and unconscious.

“ He was a great personality and he leaves no successor. Of the last Cabinet there are only five of us left in the House of Commons !

“ I am thankful to hear that Spencer is convalescent, and I trust that there are no sequelæ which may weaken his strength.

“ I wish you a smooth and pleasant voyage—a brilliant success—and an early return to what your host* always calls ‘ Britain ’ but which I am stupid enough to call England.

“ Have you formed any idea about the universal controversy as to the date of the Dissolution ?

* Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

"I fancy that Southampton will be a tight corner both for A. B. and J. C.

"Yours very truly,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

And two months later on Lord Morley's return from America :

"Woodthorne,

"Wolverhampton,

"December 11th, 1904.

"MY DEAR MORLEY,

"I am delighted to see that you are back safe and sound in the old country. I have, as far as abbreviated telegrams enabled me, followed you in your American trip, and, if I may say so, have fully appreciated the genial wisdom and the true statesmanship with which you have dealt with many controversial topics.

"I am very anxious to see you, and hear from you, your opinions on what you have heard and seen and said. I expect to be in London next week. Would it be possible to meet, say for lunch, at the Athenæum on Wednesday the 21st, and have a talk there ?

"I enclose a report of the last speech (condensed) I have made, so you will see where I am and what stage has been reached during your absence.

"I suppose that the speech on the 15th will give some idea of what are the present views of the Prime Minister's leaders.

"With kind regards to Mrs. Morley and our congratulations to her on your return,

"I am,

"Yours very truly,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

In 1905 the whole Liberal party was bracing itself up for the plunge into a General Election which, by the force of circumstances, was bound to come soon. Tariff Reform had given a

popular cry which was irresistible. All things seemed working together for good at last to a party which had been out of office for nearly ten years. The fortunes and the misfortunes of the war had been put away upon the shelf of things forgotten. Members of the Liberal party, who had been walking along opposite ways, met again and were ready for a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether. In January, 1905, my father wrote the following letter :

" Woodthorne,
" Wolverhampton,
" January 22nd, 1905.

" MY DEAR MORLEY,

" I must drop you a line to congratulate you and to thank you for your superb speech on Friday. The only complete report is in the *Manchester Guardian*, but I hope that the Liberal Publication Department will lose no time in reprinting fully and accurately in pamphlet form, what I think is the best speech of the recess.

" The combination of the finest statesmanship with the most polished, keenest swordsmanship and the clearest impression of the constitutional, I might say national, danger ought to be circulated amongst all the constituencies.

" The next act in the drama will be played in the House of Commons and it rests with the Opposition (Front Bench and back benches) to decide the meaning and character of that vital section of the story.

" What horrible weather ! My wife and I are going to the South Coast for a few days but I expect to be in London before Parliament opens.

" Yours very truly,
" HENRY H. FOWLER."

To which he received this reply :

" Your letter," wrote Lord Morley, at the beginning of 1905, " is indeed a friendly act, for speaking dejects me, and

such generous approval as yours is a welcome cordial. Many thanks to you. I had a night with C.-B., and much talk. He is in good spirits though quite alive to the embarrassments that may await him one of these days."

In April, 1905, there was celebrated in Wolverhampton the twenty-fifth anniversary of Henry Fowler's return to Parliament as Member for that borough. An enormous meeting of over six thousand assembled in the Drill Hall, and the Right Hon. H. H. Asquith was present, having come, to use his own words, "to associate himself with them in congratulating his old friend and valued colleague, and their representative, on the attainment of an anniversary which was equally honourable and interesting to Wolverhampton and to himself. It would not," he continued, "be seemly for him to say anything of the personal debt, a debt of long-standing and of ever accumulating volume, which he owed Sir Henry Fowler for his counsel, his sympathy, and his friendship; nor need he enlarge in his presence and before them, who knew them so well, upon the qualities which had carried Sir Henry Fowler to a front place in the ranks of British statesmanship. He took with him to Westminster, not only a trained mind and an eloquent tongue, but that capacity for prompt and efficient discharge of public business, which was nowhere so well acquired as in the stirring and strenuous life of communities like that at Wolverhampton. Of the twenty-five years of which he had spoken, at least twenty years had been spent by the Liberal party in Opposition. Its opportunities for reconstructive work had been few and slender. Nevertheless, Sir Henry Fowler had left an ineffaceable mark upon administration and legislation. As the author and the architect of the Parish Councils Act he had the rare privilege of seeing in every county, and in almost every hamlet in England, an enduring monument of his own worthy and laborious task; while in the still more responsible position of Secretary of State for India, apart from great administrative service, his memorable speech on the Cotton Duties—one of the few speeches which had visibly turned the decision of the House of Commons—would live as a splendid exposition of the

responsibilities which belong to our trusteeship over the greatest of our dependencies."

After the magnificent reception which the meeting gave to Henry Fowler, an illuminated address was presented to him by the late Mr. Fuller, who was then the veteran of Liberalism in the borough. He recalled an interesting incident of forty-seven years ago when he attended a large meeting in Wolverhampton to listen to a lecture by the great Sir Robert Peel on taxation. He described how Sir Robert Peel stood there, a great burly figure with a stick almost as big as himself in his hand with which he emphasized his chief points by a heavy thud on the floor. He tried to explain the difference between direct and indirect taxation. At the end of the speech there arose from the body of the hall a young man with a stern, set countenance on whose brow might have been written "life is real, life is earnest." That young man took up the main points of the lecture and in fifteen minutes he had explained them more thoroughly and clearly than Sir Robert had done in a speech of two hours' duration. He went straight to the question; he did not beat about the bush; he was clear and concise. Mr. Fuller said that as he listened to this young man he felt that a new intellectual force had entered into Wolverhampton, a force that would have to be reckoned with in politics. From that day forward no Liberal meeting in Wolverhampton was complete without the presence of Mr. Fowler. When 1880 came and there was likely to be a vacancy, Mr. Fowler was present at the meeting of the committee for choosing a candidate, and he then expressed the opinion that he did not understand why the people of Wolverhampton were thinking of going out of the town to find a representative. In his opinion there was a man in Wolverhampton competent to represent their interest in Parliament and that man was Henry Fowler. One of the objections raised was that the people of Wolverhampton had been accustomed to be represented by some eminent man—by a statesman. The answer was short and sharp. "If you have Mr. Fowler you will have a statesman and an eminent man."

On accepting the address my father said:

"He could not convey to them the feeling of gratitude and

thankfulness which he experienced in being permitted to see the day when such an assembly as that—representing the backbone of Wolverhampton—should honour him by expressing their approbation of his public career which, like other public careers, had been marked—must be marked—by weakness, by folly, and by failure. To render to him appreciation of what he had done showed that, while they had overlooked much that needed overlooking, they had appreciated to the full what he had attempted to do, and what he had done.”

He gave them a brief sketch of his efforts, his ideals, and his work in the House of Commons, and he concluded thus :

“ They knew his opinions well. He could only say that his long experience had confirmed him more strongly than ever in the views which he put forward when they chose him as their representative. He could not say to them as the American candidate was reported to have said : ‘ These are my views. If you don’t like them they can be altered.’ They knew that his views could not be altered—and they would not be altered so long as he had the honour of filling the post which he now occupied. He could only promise to do in the future what he had done in the past. He said some time ago to them, and he could not express his feeling better now, that ‘ I can look you in the face to-night and say, although that great trust which has been entrusted to me has been imperfectly performed, although its duties have been inadequately discharged, yet that trust has never been betrayed. I have not done all that you had a right to command, but I have done my best.’ No servant of the English Crown, no servant of the English people could claim higher praise than this : ‘ He tried to do his duty.’ In 1880 they elected him on the faith of what he professed and promised, and in 1905 he must be judged by what he had done. He had spoken in their name, had voted on their behalf, and by those speeches and votes he must stand or fall. He thanked them for their confidence shown in him. ~~He~~ thanked them for the beautiful address which they had presented to him, and he should value it as long as he might be spared in this world. He should hand it down to those who followed after him as one of the happiest events in his public life. He was

sure they would hold it in their dearest memory as what their father did for Wolverhampton, and what Wolverhampton had done for him."

Many letters and telegrams came from old friends—one telegram from Lord Rosebery saying: "Allow me to congratulate you on twenty-five years so well, so usefully, and so honourably employed." And Lord Morley said in a letter afterwards: "I congratulate you heartily on your function. Asquith described your wind-up as one of the most moving and effective things imaginable."

Early in December, 1905, my father received the following letter from his old friend:

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"B. will resign on Monday by lunch time. I have sent (by desire from highly-responsible quarters), an urgent wire to C.-B. to be in London not later than Monday morning. Tho King will see him that afternoon. All this is to be relied on.

"Ever yours,

"J. MORLEY."

So the battle-cry was sounded again and Henry Fowler heard it for the last time. A contested election was forced upon him, though the hope of turning him out after the recent celebration of his twenty-fifth anniversary as Member for Wolverhampton must surely have been too remote to justify the effort. Unfortunately at the beginning of the campaign my father caught a heavy cold and again showed symptoms of collapse. He was forbidden to leave his bed, and we all did our best to relieve him of the worry which he naturally felt at being laid aside at such an important time.

My sister and I swallowed a mixed potion of prejudice and inclination, and dashed around the constituency, making speeches, and delivering his messages, and playing up to the situation as far as we could. As electoral campaigns are composed of so much more excitement than logic, and as dramatic incidents command

a higher price at such times than reasonable arguments or calm deliberation, all went well as regards the election, and my father was returned by a majority of 2,865, the largest he had ever had since the division of the borough.

Free Trade won a big majority for the Liberal Government, which, after Mr. Balfour's resignation in December, had been formed by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, after the Liberals had been in Opposition for only a few months short of ten years.

CHAPTER XXIV

1906—1910

HIS LAST GOVERNMENT

"The rank is but the guinea stamp.
The man's the gowd for a' that."

BURNS.

IN December, 1905, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman formed his Government. My father felt that, owing to his advancing years, he was unable to undertake any office entailing much departmental work. In a letter to her sister-in-law in Canada my mother wrote :

"Woodthorne,

"December 20th, 1905.

"MY DEAR HULDAH,

"We fully realized that the work and responsibility of a Secretary of State's office, which was offered to Henry, would be adding to the burden of life just when he needed to be relieved, so we agreed it was wiser to give up the prize and ask for a much lighter though less important post. His claims were handsomely recognized by the Prime Minister, who offered to recommend him to the King for a Peerage, if Henry desired it; but for the present he would prefer to remain in the House of Commons. So it is all right as it is. Henry has worked so hard all his life I want him to have some rest. We sadly miss our daughters, but our little-grandson is a great joy to us. His Grandpapa delights in him.

"Henry will be writing to you himself when the New Year

comes. He wants a little time to attend to his own affairs when free from House of Commons work.

"Yours affectionately,

"ELLEN FOWLER."

The office of Privy Seal was evidently next under consideration, as the Prime Minister wrote :

"29, Belgrave Square,

"9th December, 1905.

"MY DEAR FOWLER,

"There are complications about the Privy Seal. There is no pay provided, and to add it to the estimates would, as you say, be odd, especially as we are separating the President of the Council from the President of the Board of Education, and thus duplicating a salary. I therefore cannot avoid the conclusion that instead of the Privy Seal, which gives no precedence to a Commoner and therefore has no advantage in it either of pay or position, you should be Chancellor of the Duchy. I know, too, that this will be agreeable in high quarters where, as I am significantly told, you stand very well. I do not suppose you will have any objection, and my object is to prepare an accurate list for Monday's Council. I therefore send this by messenger and shall be glad of an answer.

"Always yours very truly,

"HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN."

The Office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was totally different from any which my father had occupied before. An old-world atmosphere hung over the office and its routine, and its interests, with which the new Chancellor was quite unfamiliar. It is always an uneventful Department, and the period of my father's incumbency there from December, 1905, until October, 1908, was, even for that office, a peculiarly uneventful period.

The new Chancellor was far from enthusiastic as regards the accommodation the Duchy Office could provide, having been accustomed to the spacious rooms of Whitehall and their lordly

pile of buildings. However, a room was selected of which he approved, and it was at once to be freshly furnished. His private secretary then—Mr. H. E. Mitchell—tells how when they were choosing things for the furnishing, the Chancellor, growing impatient, asked him to choose the carpet, as he wished to be off, which Mr. Mitchell accordingly did, saying that he thought a certain carpet would do very well. The shopman solemnly drew him aside, and informed him in a reverent whisper, that his firm would hardly consider the selected carpet suitable for a Cabinet Minister to walk upon!

Soon after my father took up his work at the Duchy Office he became chairman of the Parliamentary Procedure Committee, and in the historic roll of maid-of-all-work of the Government he had his time very much taken up outside his own Department, the work of the latter not being of either quite the quality or the quantity to absorb all his energies. The question of patronage was perhaps the most engrossing with which he had to deal.

"After ten years in the shade of Opposition," writes Mr. Mitchell, "the victors of 1906 were very insistent on claiming the spoils, and Lord Wolverhampton was early beset by clamour from every city and town in Lancashire, with a Commission of the Peace, to redress, by wholesale Radical appointments to the Bench, the admitted inequality caused by ten years of Tory creations; and having neither the instinct of a Whip (possessed by his predecessor Sir William Walrond), nor the patience to suffer Radical and Labour Members gladly, his life in the Commons was harassed by these perpetual demands.

"He was further driven by the County Members to depart from the practice of leaving the selection of County Justices to the Lord Lieutenant, and it required some ingenuity to carry through, without friction, a compromise he made with Lord Derby, to the effect that he would appoint all Lord Derby's nominations to the County Bench and should at the same time request (and practically require) the Lord Lieutenant to include in such nominations any names which he as Chancellor might think proper to send to Lord Derby, unless either party to this arrangement could convince the other of the unsuitability of any particular candidate.

The position might not have proved a possible one for long, and would perhaps have led to trouble, but soon afterwards Lord Derby died, and the appointment of Lord Shuttleworth as Lord Lieutenant, and the Chancellor's acceptance of the distinguished honour of a Viscountcy (and his consequent escape from the Commons), considerably relieved him of his difficulties in this most thankless and irksome form of patronage.

"There is evidence that Lord Wolverhampton did not too seriously regard the possible dangers of this form of dual responsibility, which he undertook with Lord Derby, as on one occasion, being pressed as to who would decide in the case of a deadlock, he replied with one of his most engaging smiles (and no one could smile more engagingly) 'No doubt we should toss for it.' Imagination can hardly picture the stately Earl and the venerable Chancellor spinning a coin as to whether or no some particularly undesirable Lancastrian should adorn the County Bench."

Years in the public service had taught him many devious ways of avoiding difficulties—and it was a revelation in diplomacy to watch him receiving furious and truculent deputations, listening patiently to their demands, and then, with a genial smile and some pleasant reminiscence or anecdote, closing the interview, and dismissing the deputation, calmed and convinced that their claims would be considered.

In his ecclesiastical patronage my father was most careful and painstaking. The selection of a suitable incumbent was a matter of grave importance to him, and though he was most careful always to consult the Bishop of the diocese, and to insure his approval, yet he felt a personal responsibility in the choice, which allowed of no shifting his share of it on to other shoulders.

Not many livings happened to fall vacant while he was Chancellor, but to two of them he was able, to his great personal satisfaction, to appoint the sons of Wesleyan Ministers. He never lost his interest in the parishes of which he had been the patron, ~~and he~~ liked from time to time to see their local magazines and to watch how their work was progressing.

When staying at Cromer he was interested to visit different churches in that neighbourhood, which are in the patronage of

the Duchy, and in the case of one of them, which required structural repair, he arranged for the matter to be brought before the Council of the Duchy, and a substantial sum was voted for the remedy.

As Chancellor he was, for the first time in his life, brought into practical contact with some of the inner workings of the Church of England, and he expressed himself most vehemently on the need for reform there.

The present popular plan of levelling down the incomes of the clergy was not so desirable, in his opinion, as a plan to level them up to what he considered should be a living wage for men of culture and education, with wives and families, who were not fortunate enough to possess private means.

He sharply judged certain pluralities which came under his observation, and could tell a tale of neatly-garbed grabbing, which his keen business eye at once pierced, and which failed to hoodwink his practical knowledge of men and matters. But to the deserving and the appealing he was both tender-hearted and generous

"If it were in my own Church," I have heard him say, "that the ministers of religion were paid as poorly, and pressed as hardly, as hundreds of the clergy, I should never rest day or night till the machinery was set in motion to redress that wrong. England is a rich country, and a Christian country, and it is a vast system of mismanagement within the Church itself, which is the cause of the poverty and hardship which so many of the clergy suffer, and so few deserve." The crowds of applicants for every bit of patronage touched his sympathies rather than tried his patience, seeing how poor were the livings which so many desired.

"I hate patronage," he often said. "You have to disappoint so many, and you can only please one."

While Chancellor my father considerably extended the scope of the Duchy contributions to charitable and deserving causes, and so far as was possible he vivified the dry bones of departmental work and tradition which the Duchy claimed as its own. But that they were dry bones he always felt, and perhaps the Duchy of Lancaster was the least congenial to him of all the offices which he was called to hold. That he nevertheless admirably fulfilled

the office of Chancellor of the Duchy, is proved by his receiving at its termination the signal mark of His Majesty's approval in being appointed a Member of his Duchy Council—on which he served for the remainder of his life.

In March, 1906, he wrote to Mrs. Robert Fowler in Canada :

“Duchy of Lancaster Office,

“March 10th, 1906.

“MY DEAR HULDAH,

“The pressure of business attendant upon the formation of a new Government here and on the General Election has delayed my writing to you earlier. I am sending you a New Year's gift (though rather late) with my best wishes for you and yours.

“I have accepted an office of slight work, as I did not at my age feel equal to the increasing work of one of the great administrative departments, and though the Cabinet work is very heavy at present I hope it will soon diminish and that I shall have more leisure than I have had for a long time.

“We are all, thank God, pretty well, including the little grandson.

“Mr. Baker, one of the members of the new Parliament, tells me that he knows your family well, and he spoke in the highest terms of Robert” (his half-brother). “I hope that Joseph is getting on well. From all one hears of Canada it seems to be a certainty that prosperity and progress are the rules in your dominion.

“Your affectionate brother,

“HENRY H. FOWLER.”

Early in the Session of the new Parliament the Prime Minister wrote to him :

“10, Downing Street,

“4th May, 1906.

“MY DEAR FOWLER,

“After you went away we discussed the arrangement of the Education debate—and it was unanimously

agreed to ask you to speak on Monday. Will you do it? What is wanted is a moderate, conciliatory but firm statement of our case, and you are the best man to do this. More fiery spirits can come later. Please consent to this. Not necessarily to follow Wyndham, but rather to come later, and put it all on a reasonable footing in your own persuasive, reasonable way.

“ Yours,

“ H. C.-B.”

My father's views on the Education question may be finally summarized thus: That public control of education should follow the expenditure of public money; that the teaching profession should be relieved from religious tests; and that the Bible should not be excluded from the Elementary Schools.

In a private conversation about this time, about the Education Bill, he said:

“ I do not believe in a secular solution. We want to train the children in love of virtue and truth, and they can learn that from the Bible and from nowhere else. I can conceive of no greater calamity than that the young people who are to be the nation's future citizens and rulers should be brought up in ignorance of the knowledge of God and all the solemn requirements of the Christian faith.”

In the September of 1906 my father received the following letter from Lord Morley, who was then Secretary of State for India:

“ Flowermead,

“ Wimbledon Park,

“ September 30th, 1906.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I found your letter waiting for me here yesterday, on our return from Harrogate. We had a fortnight there, with much advantage.

“ I wish you had been able to give me a more cheery ~~story~~ of an unbroken holiday. But as you have learnt before now, the chances and changes and occasions of life are beyond our reach, and we have to take things as they come.

"Yes, we went to Skibo for ten days in August—most pleasant. . . .

"It is no small satisfaction to me that you approve my language to the people at Simla, for you were an Indian expert Grey, Asquith and Haldane have all written me in the same sense. I have never been out of reach of pouches—pretty well loaded too.

"I fancy the Cabinet will be about October 15th. That is what C.-B. talked of, when I stayed with him after the funeral. He was in extraordinary good condition, and has no notion whatever of taking his hand off the tiller.

"I cannot but be sorrowful about Chamberlain. For thirteen or fourteen years we were like brothers.

"The conference of railway men will damage us gravely with the middle class, for railways are the middle class investment; and to pull profits down from an average of 3½ to 2½ per cent.—as they admit to be the effect of their demand—will frighten people. And if anybody thinks we can govern this country against the middle class, he is wrong. I believe that you and I think entirely alike about these things.

"Best regards to Lady Fowler,

"Yours,

"J. M."

Which showed that the old Indian Secretary's interest in the affairs of that country had never abated.

There was one marked difference between Henry Fowler in his last Government, and what he had always been before. He had become a silent man. He spoke very little in Cabinets, he spoke but occasionally in Parliament, he spoke very rarely in the country. When he did speak there was no mistaking Henry Fowler's words and views and arguments—he was the same man he had been in youth and middle-age, but his weapons were wearing thin, and his strength to wield them was not so untiring. One of his last great utterances was on the modern question of Socialism.

"There was a feeling," he said, "of dissatisfaction among all

classes, who believed that the general condition was capable of improvement and that it ought to be improved. But they had to be careful as to many of the remedies which enthusiastic men, which generous men, were proposing for dealing with that important question. A school had arisen in this country—and it was not a school to be despised, but one which would have to be dealt with by fair argument and reasoning—which demanded that our national industries, alike of production, of manufacture, and of distribution, should be vested in and carried on by public authorities, and that the existing property of individuals or proprietors should be transferred from private to public ownership. It might be said that he was talking nonsense—that nobody had proposed this. Had they not? The first step was taken last Session. A Bill was introduced into Parliament and read a first time—it was not introduced by an obscure member. Under its powers a local authority might acquire, or establish, and carry on, either within or without its area, a traffic business, a manufacturing business, a commercial business, a banking business, an insurance business, or any other business or industry whatever. But there was one exception, one industry that was to be left out of that wide net which was to take in everything else, and that was ‘except the brewers, the tavern-keepers and the hotel-keepers.’ They were to remain the one uncontrolled industry. He did not know why their industry was to be excepted. It appeared almost ludicrous. But it would be a very grave thing for this country if it was ever passed into law. He did not believe it ever would be or could be passed into law. Those who were responsible for the carrying on of the trade, who had built it up, who had developed our colossal trade throughout the world, were interested in the protection of that trade, and they knew that successful industry and trade were carried on by men and not by committees and Town Councils. They knew that those industries had been carried on by their ability, energy, personal management, personal interest, and personal motive, and that was the secret of all commercial success and of all trading success in the country. He did not think it out of place if he lifted up his voice against any proposal which indicated steps of the character he had described, for

such a proposal if carried out would be fatal not only to all commercial prosperity, but to the commercial existence of the Empire.

* * * * *

"Proposals must be made to ameliorate the condition of the workers, those prevented by age or infirmity, or by bad trade from obtaining work. Some people called this social reform, others called it Socialism. Socialism had been defined as the nationalization of the means of production, of sale and exchange. He would have nothing to do with any such scheme. He would oppose it to the utmost. Nothing could be more unwise. He would oppose it in the interests of commerce, and industry, and of the people themselves. The thing was impracticable, almost unthinkable. He reminded them of what he once heard Mr. Gladstone say. There was a conversation, not on Socialism as a whole, but on the nationalization of the land. The old gentleman, in his quiet and stern way, listened for a long time; then he broke out suddenly with these words: 'Do you mean to pay for it, or do you not? If you mean to pay for it, it is folly; if you don't mean to pay for it, it is robbery.' Socialism was much talked about by a powerful body of well-meaning men, who had not thought the question out, and who did not explain how, under such a system, great concerns were to be worked, or how the commercial relationships between this and foreign countries were to be maintained. While opposing Socialistic proposals, he would support every legislative and administrative effort to promote the prosperity and the happiness of the subjects of the Crown."

In 1908 the political cards were again reshuffled. On the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman the King sent for Mr. Asquith and some reconstruction of the Cabinet was necessary. On Monday morning, April 13th, 1908, the announcement appeared in the *Times* that "the King had been pleased to confer the dignity of Viscount of the United Kingdom on the Right Hon. Sir Henry Fowler, G.C.S.I."; and at the same time it was also conferred on the Right Hon. John Morley, O.M. It was, I am sure, a great satisfaction to my father that his name was coupled with that of his old friend in this last great distinction.

On April 19th he received the following autograph letter from King George V., then Prince of Wales :

“ Marlborough House,

“ April 18th, 1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ I must send you one line of sincere congratulations upon the Peerage which you have had the honour of receiving from the King. May you enjoy the less exacting life of the House of Lords for many years to come is the heartfelt wish of

“ Yours most sincerely,

“ GEORGE P.”

Among many letters of congratulation with which every post for the next few days was crowded, the following from Sir Fleetwood Edwards appeared :

“ United Service Club,

“ 1st May, 1908.

“ DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ Let me offer you my congratulations upon your elevation after so many years of right good hard work during which, dating from the days of our dear old Queen, I can look back to many a pleasant time with you.

“ May you long be spared to enjoy your comparative rest.

“ Yours very truly,

“ FLEETWOOD J. EDWARDS.”

From the Bishop of Lichfield :

“ DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ Will you allow me to congratulate you on the well-earned honour conferred upon you? Your services to the State and the Empire have been great; and apart from party politics all who know you will rejoice at this recognition of those services. Personally I can write as one who from my point of view, is placed in a position which should know no partisanship; and I can say that the House of Lords will be the gainer by your presence as a member.

“ Believe me, dear Sir Henry,

“ AUGUSTUS LICHFIELD.”

From Lord Morley :

“ Flowermead,

“ Wimbledon Park, S.W.

“ April 20th, 1908.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I ought to have sent you a word of friendly salutation a week ago, and my only excuse is that I have been positively swamped with correspondence.

“ Yes—as you so kindly put it this morning—my decision seems to meet with general approval, and I am satisfied that it was right in the circumstances of the moment, alike in respect of India, and of our party, Cabinet, and political leaders here.

“ I cordially reciprocate all that you generously write about our long span of comradeship. It has been to me one of the things that make Parliamentary life endurable. It is a mighty pleasure to me to think that it will continue on red benches what it has for all these years been upon green.

“ Ever yours,

“ J. MORLEY.”

His old friend Lord James of Hereford wrote :

“ Breamore House,

“ near Salisbury,

“ April 14th, 1908.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Hitherto I have never desired to be a Viscount, but now I do so.

“ For if I were of that high degree I should seek the honour of being allowed to introduce into that Chamber, which needs so much amendment, one of my oldest and most regarded friends.

“ With best congratulations and all assurances of friendship,

“ Yours most truly,

“ JAMES OF HEREFORD.”

From Lord Midleton :

“ Cliveden,

“ Taplow,

“ April 22nd, 1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ You must pardon the old name till you adopt the new one.

“ May I tell you what genuine pleasure it is to me to know that you will honour the House of Lords by finishing your long and useful public career in that Assembly ? I can assure you that you will be warmly welcome and that you will find your matured and pointed eloquence will tell greatly there.

“ The House of Lords, though I have been there less than a year, I can vouch for to this extent, that a fine statement of a case from your side does influence even the great mass opposite, and much as I have minded being cut off for ever from the House of Commons there is some little compensation in the certainty that the House of Lords must play an important part in modifying the rapid veerings of public opinion I do not believe this will be in future confined to one party.

“ Again congratulations,

“ Yours very truly,

“ MIDLETON.”

The Bishop of Ripon :

“ The Palace,

“ Ripon,

“ April 15th, 1908

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY FOWLER,

“ May I venture to send you my very sincere good wishes on this new honour, so well won, which has come to you ?

“ Many will rejoice, and rightly rejoice ! May I assure you that among the number who do so most sincerely is

“ Ever yours truly,

“ W. B. RIPON.”

Mr. Justice Manisty wrote :

“ 1, Howard Street,

“ Strand, London, W.C.

“ April 13th, 1908.

“ DEAR SIR HENRY FOWLER,

“ Allow me to offer you my very hearty congratulations on the high honour the King has announced his intention of conferring upon you. It is only meet recognition of the great services you have rendered to the State—to the Empire—for many years, and I am sincerely glad to see from the papers that you will continue those services, though you will sit in ‘ another place.’

“ Believe me to be,

“ Yours very truly,

“ H. MANISTY.”

From Lord Kilbracken :

“ India Office,

“ Whitehall, S.W.

“ 15th April, 1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ I address you for the last time by this name, style, and title, in order to express my great gratification at the honour which has been conferred upon you—a gratification which will be shared by all who had the pleasure of working under you at this office.

“ Quite apart from the personal question, I rejoice to think that we shall now be thoroughly well represented in that gilded chamber—which, in spite of everything, still counts
• for something !

“ Please accept my most hearty congratulations.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ ARTHUR GODLEY.”

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From Lord Fitzmaurice :

“ Foreign Office,
“ April 14th, 1908.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ I remember your kindly saying to me in 1906 at Buckingham Palace, that when the Government was formed, you had hoped we would have sat together on the Front Bench of the House of Commons. It is at least a satisfaction now to think that we shall sit together on the Front Bench of the House of Lords, when you will be welcomed by all your old friends, and by many others besides.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours sincerely,
“ FITZMAURICE.”

From the Rt. Hon. George W. E. Russell :

“ The Reform Club,
“ April 13th, 1908.

“ Best congratulations, my dear friend, to you and Lady Fowler. I cannot conceive anything pleasanter to look back upon than 28 years spent unbrokenly in the representation of your friends and neighbours.

“ May the future be as happy as the past.

“ Yours sincerely,
“ GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL.”

Lord Knutsford wrote :

“ The Athenæum,
“ Pall Mall, S.W.
“ 13-4-1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ I hope you will let me as an old friend congratulate you, as I do very sincerely, upon your promotion to a haven of rest after the strenuous life in the House of Commons. And I hope you will let me add my hope that for some time you will enjoy your rest.

“ Yours sincerely,
“ KNUTSFORD.”

From the Right Hon. Walter H. Long :

“ 51, Cadogan Gardens,
“ 15-iv.-1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ Forgive me for saying how sorry I am that you are leaving our House. We shall miss you greatly, and I personally shall always remember with gratitude the many acts of friendship you have consistently shown me.

“ I hope we shall often read or hear you in the other House.

“ Sincerely yours,
“ WALTER H. LONG.”

From Sir Hugh Owen :

“ Voel,
“ South Grove,
“ Highgate,
“ May 5th, 1908.

“ DEAR LORD WOLVERHAMPTON,

“ So many years have elapsed since I held office at the Local Government Board, during the time that you were President of the Board, that I must almost have passed out of your recollection.

“ I am very mindful of the consideration and kindness which were shown me by you during that time, and shall always remember the great strain of work imposed on you in connection with the Local Government Bill of 1894, which you so successfully carried through Parliament.

“ It is to me very gratifying that the public services which you have rendered during so long a period have received the recognition of a Peerage, and I hope that in the House of Lords you may long continue to give the State like service.

• “ Very heartily I congratulate you.

“ Believe me always,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ HUGH OWEN.”

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Lord Blyth :

“ 33, Portland Place, W.

“ 14th April, 1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ Your accession to our somewhat thin ranks in the Upper House is very welcome to me, and must be so to the whole Liberal party there, and to your legions of friends outside.

“ May your presence in the House of Lords be a long one, to help our leaders with your wise counsel and ripe experience.

“ With kindest regards to dear Lady Fowler, whom I hope very soon to address differently,

“ I am,

“ My dear Sir Henry,

“ Yours most truly,

“ BLYTH.”

From Sir Walter Runciman, Bt., father of the Right Hon. Walter Runciman :

“ National Club,

“ April 14th, 1908.

“ DEAR SIR HENRY FOWLER,

“ If I may do so, without appearing presumptuous, I should like to congratulate you on being made a Peer. The Upper House is sadly in need of men of your wide knowledge and debating power. We are as lopsided there, as the Tories are in the Commons ; moreover, the self-sacrifice you have shown in not seeking repose from the cares of office will be appreciated by the country.

“ May I take this opportunity of cordially thanking you for the great kindness you have always shown to my son. He appreciates it just as much as I do, which is saying a good deal.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ WALTER RUNCIMAN.”

From Lord Stamfordham :

“ Marlborough House,

“ Pall Mall, S.W.

“ April 17th, 1908.

“ MY DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ I hope you will allow me to offer my hearty congratulations upon your receiving a Peerage. May you live to enjoy many years of comparative peace in the Upper House after your long and stirring life in the Commons.

“ I hope Lady Fowler is in better health.

“ After the holidays I should like to have a few minutes talk about the '51 Commission if you will kindly let me come to see you.

“ Yours very truly,

“ ARTHUR BIGGE.”

The late Sir Percy Bunting, Editor of the *Contemporary Review* :

“ 11, Endsleigh Gardens,

“ London, N.W.

“ April 14th, 1908.

“ MY DEAR FOWLER,

“ Allow me to congratulate Lady Fowler and yourself on your elevation.

“ It is a well-earned honour. You are to be the first Methodist—almost the first Nonconformist—Peer ; and I hope you may do something to leaven the Lords with some popular religion.

“ Perhaps you can do something also to help the Coronation settlement. It is high time it was settled, and I think the delay is doing religion harm.

“ Very sincerely,

“ PERCY WILLIAM BUNTING.”

Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett, Head of the Bermondsey Settlement :

“ Bermondsey Settlement,
“ 13th April, 1908.

“ DEAR SIR HENRY,

“ Will you allow me to offer you my heartiest congratulations on your elevation to the Peerage. What gives me the greatest pleasure is that it means your continuance in Office, and that it will enable you to serve the cause of progress and conciliation combined in a way which, I believe, will serve the Church as much as the State.

“ I earnestly trust that your health may be long preserved to exercise a moderating influence in the House of Lords.

“ Believe me, dear Sir Henry,

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ J. SCOTT LIDGETT.”

From Dr. Waller, late President of the Wesleyan Conference :

“ DEAR SIR HENRY FOWLER,

“ I have seen with the utmost pleasure that you have been made a Peer. The honour conferred upon you is abundantly deserved, and, whilst it will give general satisfaction throughout the Kingdom, the Wesleyan Methodists will specially rejoice. My sincere prayer is that in the House of Lords you may be long spared to serve the Nation and Empire.

“ I am,

‘ Yours very truly,

“ D. J. WALLER.”

As Sir Percy Bunting mentioned—a fact of which my father required no reminder—he was the first Wesleyan who was created a Peer. And though of course it would be the height of snobbish absurdity to imagine that any Church could be honoured by the rank of its members, yet my father and his contemporaries were old enough to remember the days when to be a Nonconformist was a clog on any man’s career—indeed, an actual disability to

him in many of the avenues of advancement ; the fact, therefore, that he—being a Wesleyan Methodist—was created a Viscount of the United Kingdom, was a notable milestone in the great progress of religious freedom, in which he gloried as a sign of wider toleration, better understanding and a nobler catholicity throughout the Christian world.

A dinner was given to my father on his elevation by some of his personal friends at the Savoy Hotel, at which a hundred were present. Sir George Chubb, Bart., presided, and among the letters of regret he read from those who were unable to be present was one from Lord Rosebery, who said : “ I have a prior engagement from which I cannot disengage myself, or it would have given me the greatest pleasure to attend the dinner to Viscount Wolverhampton and testify to my sincere regard and respect for him.” And Lord Justice Moulton also wrote : “ Apart from my great esteem and friendship for Lord Wolverhampton personally, I, like all sons of Methodist preachers, feel that his brilliant career sheds a reflected glory on us all, and that we have a share in his triumphs.” There were other letters from the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister, the Bishop of London, Right Hon. Walter Runciman, Sir John Randles, Dr. Moulton, Dr. Rigg and many others.

The Earl of Dartmouth proposed my father’s toast and he recalled the close friendship which had existed one hundred and fifty years ago between John Wesley and the Lord Dartmouth of that day, who was styled, to distinguish him, his descendant avowed, from all other bearers of that name—“ the good Lord Dartmouth.” My father’s grandfather being also a close friend of John Wesley, it was fitting that their descendants should thus meet on such an occasion, where the one was called upon to do honour to the other !

The President of the Conference, the Rev. J. S. Simon, also spoke, in jointly proposing that toast. He said what a privilege he felt it to represent the Wesleyan Methodist people on that unique occasion, when the President of the Conference was called to propose the health of a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church who had been elevated to the peerage. They honoured

Lord Wolverhampton throughout the Church, and they honoured him as a son of their Church, and those who had read anything of Methodist history honoured him as a son of his father. His father was a reformer before the Reformation, and with a very clear outlook into the future, and a very sharp discernment of the dangers of the time in which he lived. He put his hands to reforms which had been carried out and perfected, very much through the influence of his son. They were indebted to Lord Wolverhampton for the share he had taken in perfecting the constitution of their Church, and in liberalizing its institutions. The Methodist constitution was very delicate and had to be handled very carefully. A rash hand complicated everything and destroyed everything. But when that great measure which created the Representative Session of the Conference was launched, they found in Lord Wolverhampton one whose moderating counsels, wise and cautious, marched with very steady step in the direction of reform. He understood what they called the rights of the ministers, he also understood what they called the rights of the laymen; he remembered that their constitution was a system of checks and balances; and they could never forget the splendid services Lord Wolverhampton had rendered. But they felt a further debt to him because he had always stood for the increase of reverence in their public services, and the perfecting of the liturgical part of those services. He also referred to my father's work in connection with the Hymn Book Committee. Sir George Chubb said that Lord Wolverhampton was present that evening not so much as a statesman but as their personal and near friend, and those present had come from all parts of England where they represented many phases of British life, in order that they might give a welcome to Lord Wolverhampton, and wish him long life and many happy years of usefulness in the position to which he had been raised.

In reply my father said: "It was utterly impossible for him to express his emotions at the absolutely unexpected compliments that had been paid him by his friends and neighbours from Staffordshire, and the town with which he had been so intimately connected, and by his friends in the Methodist Church. There was nothing political in that evening's proceedings. English political

life was, happily, not a personal one. He had never concealed his party views, as his friends would bear him out ; he had always held the opinion that party was an essential feature in the freedom and efficiency of their national institutions. Lord Beaconsfield once said that parliamentary government meant party government. If the latter were weakened the former would certainly be in danger. If they did not have party government they would have group government, which was a much greater danger, and certainly much less moderate. Power would be put in irresponsible hands ; but in party government they had a combination of men of various talents, and various views, who had agreed upon certain principles to which they attached importance, and they would never free themselves from the responsibility of their actions and political conduct. No such feeling existed in groups run by one or two individuals or run by combinations of party, who under no circumstances would be expected to coalesce. He very much disliked to see either side claiming a monopoly of patriotism or of political sagacity. They could differ as to policy, or administration, or legislation, without maintaining that their opponents were rogues or fools. Every man was entitled to defend his opinions and to do his utmost to secure their adoption as a permanent influence in the State ; but the great government of that Empire, the most powerful, the most influential government in the world, was too gigantic a trust, too solemn and sacred a trust, to be degraded to a faction fight. He was free to confess that the only criticism to which he had been subjected—he hardly knew whether it was a compliment or a censure—was that he combined Liberal principles with Conservative instincts. In discharging his duties in his borough he had done so irrespective of party feelings. In October he would celebrate his golden wedding with municipal government. Fifty years ago he was elected a Member of the Wolverhampton Town Council, and the growth of the institutions of that town, and their growing success, had always kindled in him the deepest interest, and on those grounds he justified the choice of his title. He must also refer to that large section of the hosts of the evening to whom he

belonged ecclesiastically. Lord Dartmouth had referred to his ancestor, the good Lord Dartmouth, who was also immortalized in a line of Cowper's as 'the peer who wore a coronet and prayed.' He felt that it was the desire of his Church with its millions of adherents in all parts of the globe, to live and work in harmony with all other sections of the Christian Church. So long as he had the health and strength to take a humble part in public life, he should do his utmost to promote the just and peaceful settlement of all questions which tended to arouse religious strife. He was a man of peace. He desired peace in all those questions, and he thought there were few questions, whether political or ecclesiastical, which could not be settled by an application of the great axiom of doing unto others as you would they should do unto you."

The whole of this year was heavily clouded at home by the long and dangerous illness of my mother. Happily she was sufficiently better for a few months to rejoice in the honour paid to my father on his elevation to the peerage, though she was never really well again. But it was a great joy to her, and to him in her, though for himself he had outgrown the prize-days of life. "I am very glad," wrote Lord Morley that September, "to have a friendly signal from you. Glad, too, to know that you are both of you the better for Cromer, and that a new ray of sunshine lights your domestic hearth" (that was an allusion to the birth of my second son). Mr. Carnegie also wrote to him that month.

" Skibo Castle,

" Dornoch,

" Sutherland,

" September 30th, 1908.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" Your note is precious. So glad to hear from you. I like the 'Hero Fund' because no one suggested it. It is my own chicken. . . .

" The reception given here is most gratifying. In America there were some critics at first, but it has triumphed as I knew it would.

“ Kindest regards to dear Lady Fowler, and all your household in which Mrs. Carnegie warmly joins.

“ No friends like the old friends.

“ Always your friend,

“ ANDREW CARNEGIE.”

At a special Degree Congregation of the University of Birmingham held in the Great Hall of the University Buildings at Edgbaston on the 20th October, 1909, the degree of LL.D. *honoris causâ* was conferred by the Vice-Chancellor on thirty-one gentlemen and one lady, including Lord Wolverhampton, the Right Hon. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, the Right Hon. Walter Long, Lord Rayleigh, Lord Strathcona, Professor Gilbert Murray, Sir H. Butlin (President of the College of Surgeons), the Chancellor of the University (Mr. Chamberlain), and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick.

The various recipients were presented by the Principal (Sir Oliver J. Lodge), and in presenting Lord Wolverhampton the Principal said: “ The Lord President of the Council has held various important offices under the Crown. He has been President of the Local Government Board, Secretary of State for India, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and everywhere, for his honest and ungrudging service, he has won the gratitude and esteem of his countrymen. To the Midland counties he is bound by one of the closest ties. His philanthropic and other public work has been recognized by men of all political parties; and that he reciprocates the hearty affection in which he is held by a neighbouring and friendly borough, is amply attested in the name by which he has chosen that we should know him. I present to you a typical English gentleman, Sir Henry Hartley Fowler, Viscount Wolverhampton.”

The most important part my father took in the proceedings of the House of Lords was the conduct of the Old Age Pensions Bill through the House in the summer of 1908. When he moved the second reading of the Bill, he was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury and several Unionist peers.

On the resignation of Lord Tweedmouth, owing to illness, in October, 1908, the Prime Minister wrote to my father :

“ MY DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON,

“ I have the pleasure of proposing to you that you should take poor Tweedmouth’s place as President of the Council. I hope that this will be agreeable to you.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ H. H. ASQUITH.”

which offer he accepted—kissed hands and took the oath of office as Lord President of His Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, on the 19th October, 1908.

Amongst the principal Acts of administration whilst he held this office may be mentioned—the appointment, in December, 1908, of a Departmental Committee to consider the working of the Midwives Act, 1902 ; also, the grant of a Charter to the Bedford College for Women (London) in 1908, and, in the following year, a Charter to the University of Bristol.

In November, 1908, my father presided at an investigation, by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, into the conduct of a Colonial Judge, who had been suspended from his office by the authorities.

Though nominally, of course, the President of this body, in practice the Lord President does not sit at the hearing of appeals from India and the Colonies which form the greater part of its work. It is, however, usual for him to do so in matters where the Judicial Committee is considering matters specially referred to in it, which are not of a strictly judicial character, and the fact that the Lord President had also the advantage of a considerable legal experience made him a most valuable addition to the Board on this occasion. The fact, too, that a solicitor had presided over a Board composed of the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Halsbury, Lord Macnaghten, the late Lord Robertson and Lord Atkinson, attracted no little attention both in the daily and legal press, and advocates of fusion of the two branches of the profession were not slow to point the moral from the interesting incident.

"Lord Wolverhampton," writes his private secretary at the Privy Council Office, "as one of the great Officers of State, took a prominent part in the ceremony of the opening of Parliament by His late Majesty, King Edward VII., on Monday, 21st February, 1910; and it is feared that the physical strain of attending this State ceremony at his advanced time of life told upon the Lord President's health. From that date till his resignation, on the 20th June, 1910, he was unable to take any active part in the functions of his office, which included the great Council held on the accession of His present Majesty. During this period, he fought against chronic ill-health with the determination of a man unwilling to allow that his days of political energy were slowly but surely coming to a close."

At the time of the much discussed Budget of 1909, my brother-in-law met my father one day walking along Whitehall. It was during the debate on the Second Reading of the Budget in the House of Lords, and he was coming away from the House.

"When are you going to speak?" Mr. Felkin asked him. "I should like to hear you if you will get me into the House."

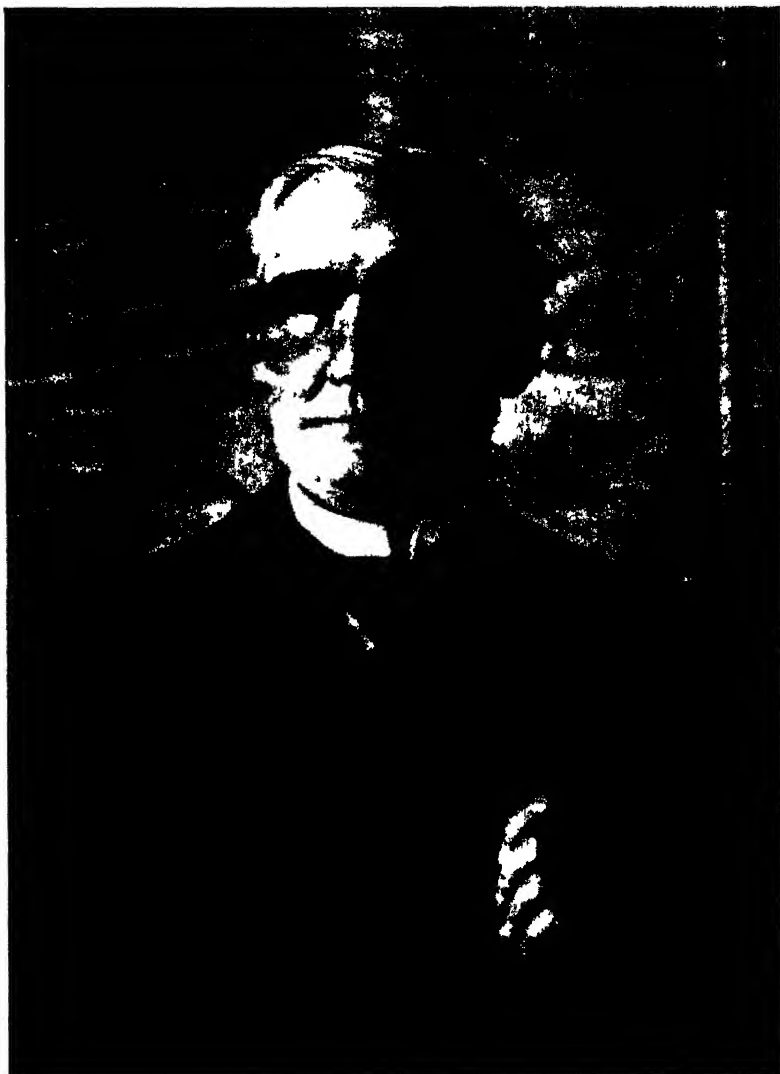
"I am not going to speak," was his unexpected reply. "I do not feel up to making the effort. I have just been talking to Lord Crewe about it. I said that if he made a point of it I would speak; but that I shrank from the effort. He, in the kindest possible way, said that, such being my feelings, he would not ask me to speak."

My mother was very anxious for him to make a speech on that occasion, and I should think that it was the first time in his life that he failed to comply with a request of hers; but he knew, and sad indeed must have been the knowledge to him, that his powers were no longer up to the demands of his will. This was the first practical indication he gave that he was not as young as he had been heretofore.

In the year 1909, his last in office, he only made three public speeches. One on behalf of the Wesleyan Forward Scheme at Hull, and another at the distribution of prizes by him on Foundation Day at Mill Hill School. At the latter he said, he was sorry not to see among the prizes one for handwriting, "for," he added,

"whether you are in political life, in judicial life, in mercantile life, in administrative life, or whether you are in love, you must realize that writing is meant to be read." The most important, however, was on the occasion when he was presented with another illuminated address by the Executive of the East Wolverhampton Liberal Association at a great public meeting, at which his colleague in the Cabinet, the Right Hon. Walter Runciman, also spoke. This was to celebrate his appointment as Lord President. Sir Alfred Hickman was present on the platform that evening. My father, referring to Sir Alfred, said: "Among the many pleasant associations which crowded his mind on that occasion was, that among the guests was his first opponent, his old opponent, his honourable opponent, who sustained during the many years during which he was associated with him in Wolverhampton a ceaseless devotion to the interests of the town, and from whom he only differed once, and that was on his political opinions."

At the end of an exhaustive speech on the practical politics of the day he made this simple statement of his own opinions on the two great questions which loomed large in the minds of all thoughtful politicians and practical statesmen: "I am," he declared, "an old-fashioned Liberal—an old-fashioned Liberal Free-Trader—I am opposed to what is called Tariff Reform, and I am equally opposed—more so—to Socialism. You may depend upon it that there is no graver danger to the interests of all classes, supremely so to the interests of working men, than would be the abolition of the rights of property in this country, and the transferring to public authorities of the control of all means of production and exchange. I can see that it would be a mistake, a fatal blunder, I may say almost a crime against the interests of the whole community." In thanking them for the confidence reposed during the long period of his public life, he added: "I am a citizen of no mean city. I feel it a great honour that, in addition to the title which the King has been pleased to confer upon me, I am still associated with the great municipality which, for so many years, has voted a portion of its Parliamentary representation to me, and which municipality I have tried to serve to the best of my ability."



Photograph by

[Elliott & Fry

ampton
Sep: 14: 1908

CHAPTER XXV

AS A METHODIST

' Perhaps one of the most noteworthy characteristics of 'the people called Methodists' is the *esprit de corps*—the spirit of clannishness, which runs through the whole body. Is any sick, the rest are eager to pray; is any merry, the rest are delighted to sing psalms; and they will not only pray and sing together, which is comparatively easy, but they are ready to spend and be spent for the brethren to any extent. Men may know they are Methodists from the love they have one to another."

Concerning Isabel Carnaby.

SO far have we walked with Henry Fowler along the great highway of his public and 'political career. We have listened to his words and entered into his thoughts, and known the man in all the changes and chances of his municipal, parliamentary and official life. But we have not known him altogether yet. What my father was in his Church and what he was at home have still to be told. And as the theme grows more intimate, the colouring is more difficult and delicate with which to paint him as he was—as he still is—in the hearts and memories of those who are bound to him by cords of kinship, and affection, and respect. A living personality he will always be to those who knew him, and to a far wider circle still of those who will ever be united to him in the growing brotherhood of Methodism.

To do full justice to Henry Fowler's interest in and love for Methodism is almost an impossible task. It was so integral a part of his whole being that one can hardly separate it into a distinct subject. And yet I want as far as possible to give specially into the hands and hearts of those who were connected with him by the Brotherhood of their Church, some actual, though necessarily inadequate, record of what Wesleyan Methodism really

meant to him, and what an influence it had upon his whole being. In regarding the great interests of his life I should say that he felt for politics the sentiments of a lover, but for Methodism the love of a son. The former he wooed, and worked for, and won. In the latter he was born and bred, and he always turned to Methodism with that homely confidence and life-long clinging which we feel for our mothers, whether we be young or old. When he talked of politics he showed the keenness, the eagerness, the unrest, the despondency of a lover ; but when he spoke of Methodism his voice melted into that tone of love which rings in children's voices. Though he discussed and criticized many a point within that church, yet it was always with a tenderness and a personal devotion which were unknown in any of the other outside relationships of his life. His daily post-bag was weighted with appeals of all kinds for help ; but if the writer were a Wesleyan, then the letter was put on one side for a personal reply, and usually the type of reply which it sought. The most ordinary, uninteresting people, whom naturally he would never have noticed, who could quote Methodism, or even a Methodist ancestry, immediately became people of importance to him. But it was no use for any suppliant to assume a garb of Methodism, even if it had occurred to them to do so. He knew the shibboleths, the freemasonry, of Methodism so well, that no one could have deceived him. The very pronunciation of the word " Wesley " was a true indicator ; and whenever he saw the Methodist masonic signs, he would root out their history until he found the strain of Methodist blood which claimed his interest, and included its inheritor within the circle of his regard. Especially were the sons of Methodist ministers dear to his heart. The brotherhood there was closest of all, and in any distinctions won by them, he felt literally a family pride and a brotherly share. However far they might have wandered from the fold of their fathers, it did not alter Henry Fowler's feeling of kinship, and he would delight in tracing much of their prowess to their inherited religion, and the atmosphere of a Methodist minister's home. Next to Methodism, Presbyterianism appealed to him most, and the homes of the early Wesleyans were of much the same type as were the Scottish manses. In

Baptists and Independents he had comparatively little interest, except of course in their great leaders—Dale, Spurgeon, Parker, Campbell Morgan, Maclaren, and such like. But to the rank and file of these Nonconforming bodies he had never the clan feeling. He hated their introduction of politics into Dissent, and beyond their preaching power they had no hold upon him personally.

The fact that he was born to an inheritance of Methodism was a great force in my father's religious life. He was a true conservative in his creeds, and it was primarily to the accident, or rather the Providence, of his birth, that Methodism owes this devoted and distinguished of her sons. His father's life and character and personality strengthened the hold of the inheritance. The great culture and scholarliness of Joseph Fowler, his power in the pulpit and in the council chamber, his intense refinement of thought and life, his strong interest in the affairs of men, and his impregnable faith in the nearness of God, all left their mark on the mind and character of his son in the impressionable days of youth, and finally fixed them into that mould of Methodism, which was thus shown to be of so noble a form and shape.

Henry Fowler's school-days had little influence upon him or his Methodism. Woodhouse Grove was a Connexional school; St. Saviour's, of course, was not—but he was never the type of boy to be the flower of any school. He took his interests and his character with him when he went to school, and he brought them away practically unaltered. They were not schoolboyish, and his life at school was never congenial to him. He made few friends—Dr. Robert Young and Dr. Walker, late High Master of St. Paul's School, were two of them—but the Methodism of Woodhouse Grove was narrower and far less attractive than that to which he had been accustomed at home, and rather repelled him than otherwise. The roughness also of the life there was specially repugnant to him after the cultured and refined simplicity of his home. Many years afterwards at a reunion of Woodhouse Grove boys he said that—“He could not refer to his school-days as the happiest of his life. The life at the Grove in his day was a cruel one; in the matter of food he should call it nothing but starvation, while the discipline was barbarous. If the school was carried on in

those ways to-day the daily papers would demand Government interference. He was glad to think that he had used his influence in the past, and had used it successfully, in ameliorating the conditions of life at the two schools for the sons of Wesleyan ministers. He had been instrumental in the appointment of a commission to investigate the question, and he remembered how interested Dr. Vaughan, the Head Master of Harrow, had been in the peculiar nature of those schools ; that the boys all came from the same kind of home, of the same social sphere, and that the social jealousies that sometimes embittered the life of other schools were quite absent here."

Nothing ever weakened or shook his allegiance to his faith. It was not until he settled in Wolverhampton in 1856, that his active life in Methodism really began. Its tenets had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength. There is, however, a record of his taking a public part in Methodist work in an account of a meeting of ministers and ministers' children, which was held at City Road Chapel, London, in 1852, when he was one of the speakers who responded on behalf of the sons of the ministers, in an address in which he enunciated "a principle of loving and loyal yet independent adhesion to the Methodism of his fathers." And this was also his first public speech.

In 1856 he spoke in Wolverhampton on the occasion of the leave-taking between the congregation of Darlington Street Chapel and two of their ministers. "The itinerancy of Methodism" he there maintained, "was the mainspring and the glory of the Connexion, in causing the diversity of mind of which every congregation was composed, to be largely influenced. In the first fifty years Methodism had accomplished that which should make the members of that body more attached to it, and prouder of it than they now were. During that time it had influenced their legislature, toned their literature, and invigorated every section of the Christian Church. It had not only influenced social life, but it was found to have a great bearing upon even the existing war."

In that same year he was one of the representatives of Methodism in the meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Wolverhampton. "Whatever interest might be attached to the dis-

semination of the Bible in foreign languages," he said, " he could not help dwelling with admiration on the increasing multiplication of the sacred volume in the English tongue. The most interesting feature in the extension of the Anglo-Saxon race was the extension of the Anglo-Saxon Bible. He could not help drawing a contrast between the position of England at the present time, and that of a nation that once exercised great sway throughout the world. England was not always the England of to-day—it had not always devolved upon the Anglo-Saxon race to rule the destinies of the world. They would remember that when the Bible was first given to us there was an empire over which the sun never ceased to shine—an empire rich in wealth, illustrious scholars, and statesmen—but amongst all of them there was not an Anglo-Saxon. No such blood flowed in the veins of the people, and where was that empire now? If they looked at the difference between the Spain of 1556 and the Spain of 1856, and contrasted the political, moral and material condition of their own beloved land, they would learn a lesson of great importance. The Spain of 1556 closed God's Book against the people. England opened God's Book, and has kept it open ever since. With regard to the complaints against our present version of the Bible he considered that version the proudest monument of the English language extant. Its beautiful passages were wound up with the daily life of the Christian. He hoped the Society would jealously watch over that version of the Bible which the holiest, as well as the most learned of men, had bequeathed to them."

In 1857 Henry Fowler gave to the Wolverhampton Wesleyan Improvement Society in Darlington Street Chapel "a very comprehensive and brilliant lecture on the Institutes of Wesleyan Methodism." This lecture was published by the society locally, but the following year it was published in London for the sake of a wider public throughout the Methodism of the country. For though it was, of course, universally known how Wesleyan Methodism had originated in the University of Oxford; how its earliest professors were subjected to the contempt and ridicule of the mob; how, notwithstanding all this, the earnestness and inspiration of those preachers carried the work on until it

became a great factor in the religious life of the country, yet very few, even among Wesleyans themselves knew all about the interior of their Church, its organizations and institutions. And this information Henry Fowler's lecture lucidly supplied. He touched on the ritual of Methodism, in which the liturgical services of the Established Church, and the extempore devotions of the Presbyterian and Nonconformist Churches, were combined; and to that ritual, combined with the true liturgy of Methodism, which is its unrivalled hymn-book, he was ever a devoted adherent. In the same year he took an active part in a movement to build new day and Sunday schools in connection with Darlington Street Chapel, which he considered was the duty of the people, not so much as citizens, or Wesleyans, but as members of a Christian Church worshipping together in one sanctuary. "Without an efficient Sunday school their church organization was criminally defective." He was always a great advocate for Sunday schools and in all the subsequent education controversies in which he took part, he argued that the religious instruction of the Sunday schools ought to dominate the whole week's education, and teach as much denominationalism as could ever be required. At a conference of Sunday-school teachers held in Wolverhampton in 1861 he first publicly expressed his opinions of Sunday-school work. "Eighty years," he said, "had nearly passed away since Robert Raikes sowed his handful of corn in the top of the mountain—a mountain sterile, barren, bleak and desolate, and already the harvests waved like the cedars of Lebanon, and the harvests of the past were but the seed-times of a more glorious future. No tongue, however eloquent, could depict what those harvests had been. They might enumerate the Sunday schools that had been founded, they might reckon up the hundreds of thousands of teachers, and the millions of scholars; they might point to the multitudes of holy living people and sainted dead, for whom the Church was indebted to her Sunday schools, but it would never be known what Sunday schools had done for this world, ~~the~~ the Church, and the Saviour, until that day when all the past machinery of the earth would be laid bare and seen in its true light, and estimated at its true value. He wished, also, to emphasize the

remark that Sunday schools were for religious instruction, and for religious instruction only. The question had arisen whether they might not safely connect the religious teaching of Sunday schools with more branches of instruction, not distinctly religious. But that question he would answer, speaking of course individually, in the negative. He took it that the mission of Sunday schools was to deal with the souls of their scholars, and he did trust that Sunday school teachers would never go down from that great work, to take up some other branch of instruction which for the time, and regarded in the light of expediency, might be advantageous or desirable. He believed in the power of personal teaching, personal knowledge and personal sympathy. He believed that the teacher in his class wielded an influence that could be wielded nowhere else, while he doubted the power of the address from the pulpit and the desk, inasmuch as the gift of addressing children in masses was one of the rarest gifts that the most experienced of ministers possessed." He considered that Sunday-school lessons should be something much more than ordinary lessons to learn and repeat—just as the Bible should never be considered and treated as an ordinary school-book. "The desire and the determination of those engaged in the great work of Sunday schools was to make as far as they could Christian men and Christian women out of the children committed to their charge. There were nearly three million of Sunday-school scholars in this country, two-thirds of whom belonged to the working classes, and they would form the working classes of the next generation. Now what agency had such a vast power to bring to bear upon that important class as Sunday schools? He was one of those who thought that the working classes had received but very scanty justice; he thought their failings and their faults had been too often unfairly exaggerated; he believed their efforts had been too often ignored, and that as a class, the working class would bear comparison with any other. But that the working classes were what they ought to be, and what it was for their interest and the interest of the country and the Church they should be, he did not hesitate to deny; and he knew of no other agency which appeared to offer so much encouragement with

reference to the working classes as Sunday schools. By their agency would be brought to bear on them the only means of elevating any class high or low—true religion, and when the working classes, forming as they did the basis of the social pyramid—when they were permeated with the spirit of Christianity, and not till then, would England be the holy, the happy and the glorious country she ought to be.”

Of actual Sunday-school work Henry Fowler had no experience whatever. He was not a teacher in any sense of the word. His incapacity for imparting instruction to those younger than himself from the desk of a master, other than from the platform of a speaker, combined with a natural reticence and reserve, rendered him utterly unfitted for any technical church work ; and, besides, he was a great believer in expert work and not in Jacks-of-all-trades. He had a fine knowledge of his own limitations in matters of work, he never attempted that which he felt he could not do, and he drew the line well inside his capabilities. Soul-science was not one of his subjects. This attitude of his concerning the necessity of a special training for all work was illustrated by a letter he wrote against the reports of the Conference being made by the ministers themselves. “The Conference refuses to admit the presence of ordinary reporters, but tacitly allows individual members of its own body to send their notes to the metropolitan and provincial Press. This plan is regarded with dissatisfaction by both ministers and laymen. It involves the employment of ministerial amateurs, who, devoid of the peculiar training of a professional reporter, do not possess the qualifications which ensure accuracy, impartiality and completeness, and who are unconscious of that *esprit de corps* which is the safest guarantee to the speaker as well as to the public.

“With all respect for the Methodist ministry, giving them full credit for what they do, and for the manner in which they do it, I venture to assert that they are not good reporters—I do not wish that they should be, I merely suggest that the Methodist ministers should not undertake a duty for which they are neither trained, nor qualified, and the performance of which will never enhance either their pulpit power or their pastoral office.”

In 1861 he wrote a letter on the then vexed question of Church rates to the editors of a leading Wesleyan paper—the *Watchman* :

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ The evidence before the Committee of the House of Lords assumed that there are only two distinct opinions current in the Wesleyan body with regard to the abolition of Church rates, each of those opinions being opposite extremes. Will you permit me to assert the existence among us of a third shade of opinion, which sympathizes with neither of these, and to express my conviction that the feelings of a very numerous and influential section of our ministers and laymen upon the Church rate question have not as yet been fairly brought before the general public.

“ The opinion to which I allude may be condensed into one sentence. It represents an intelligent as well as truly Wesleyan veneration and affection for the Church of England, combined with a decided support of the total abolition of Church rates. In other words, we believe the national Church to be a national blessing; we believe that its destruction would be a great national calamity, and we also believe that the ordinary repairs of its fabric, and the incidental expenses of its worship, should be defrayed by those who use those fabrics and join in that worship. As Wesleyan Methodists, supporting the most gigantic voluntary system which the Church of Christ has ever founded, we object, not so much on conscientious grounds, as on the principle of simple justice, to being compelled to relieve congregations possessing far more wealth, and having much fewer claims, from expenses which, in common honesty, they exclusively ought to bear. . . .

“ There are Wesleyan Methodists, I believe a distinct minority, who on high and intelligent principle, oppose the abolition of Church rates. There are Wesleyan Methodists, I believe a distinct minority, who on equally high and intelligent principle, object to all religious endowments by the State, and who advocate the abolition of Church rates.

There are also Wesleyan Methodists who, while they appreciate and respond to the claims which the Church of England has upon them as Wesleyans, yet distinctly clinging to a non-conformity based upon spiritual rather than on political grounds, and who contend that as a matter of justice to Nonconformists, and as a measure promotive of the truest interests of the Establishment, Church rates should be totally repealed.

“ I am, Gentlemen,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

In 1862 my father was largely instrumental in a scheme for the building of another Wesleyan chapel in Wolverhampton. It was a project which was almost entirely his own in conception, one that he carried through with his forceful enthusiasm, and which he subsequently enjoyed during the whole of his Methodist life in Wolverhampton. Trinity Chapel, as it was called, was the place of worship he regularly attended, and if there was ever a lay rector of a Wesleyan chapel, he most surely fulfilled that function to the uttermost, in the conduct and ruling of that sanctuary. He was on the building committee; he visited the site daily, and saw for himself how the work was being done. Indeed, in after years, when it was desired to put up a memorial tablet inside, it was almost impossible to get a nail rammed into the solid masonry. The building became the embodiment of his own cherished ideas. He and my mother gave the East window (which was South), and to this day, in spite of all the higher critics, it is my belief that Elijah went up to Heaven in an embossed yellow chariot drawn by a pair of fiery red steeds, as impressed upon my earliest recollections by that window. I remember how grieved my parents were when their grown-up children, in all the arrogance of youth, cavilled at the form and colouring of that in-artistic effort; crude it undoubtedly was, but to those who had, with their eyes turned towards it, worshipped together for most of the Sundays of fifty years, it was rich in an association which no colouring could portray, it was beautified by a hundred

hallowed memories which lingered round and lit up the scenes it so imperfectly pictured.

I think my sister must have had windows such as this in her mind when she wrote the following paragraph in *The Farringdons* :

"Not of course then, but in after years, Elisabeth learned to understand that this window was a type and an explanation of the power of early Methodism, the strength whereof lay in its marvellous capacity of adapting religion to the needs and uses of everyday life, and of bringing the infinite into the region of the homely and the commonplace. We, with our added culture and our maturer artistic perceptions, may smile at a Jacob's Ladder formed according to the domestic architecture of the first half of the nineteenth century; but the people to whom the other world was so near and so real that they perceived nothing incongruous in an ordinary stair-carpet which was being trodden by the feet of angels, had grasped a truth which on one side touched the Divine, even though on the other it came perilously near to the grotesque. And He, Who taught them as by parables, never misunderstood—as did certain of His followers—their reverent irreverence; but understanding it, saw that it was good."

There my father insisted on a full liturgical service, very rare in those days in Methodist chapels. There he allowed no tampering with the Prayer-book, and only one very short extempore prayer in the Sunday morning service. There he supervised the hymns, and approved the tunes, though sublimely incapable of giving an opinion on the latter.

There he ruled even the atmosphere, and woe to the chapel-keeper who failed to keep the large thermometer hung in his hindmost pew, up to the prescribed 60°. "One day," so Methodist tradition runs, "the chapel felt like an ice-house and the thermometer when fetched registered 62°. 'Show me exactly where you had placed it,' asked Mr. Fowler promptly. The man took him to the hot-water pipe, whereon in despair he had laid it. Another Sunday morning, the same offending chapel-keeper fetched the bread for the Communion Service from a near shop. 'You bought the bread for sacramental purposes on a Sunday?' exclaimed

Mr. Fowler furiously. 'Please, sir, I did not pay for it,' pleaded the culprit. 'So much the worse!' was the thundered answer."

In those early years, whenever the minister especially appointed for Trinity Chapel preached there, about ten of the principal men of the congregation used to meet half an hour before the service, for what is called a "class meeting." One of that number writes: "Mr. Fowler was one of the most regular and devout of the members and he took part in the exercises to the profit of all." When the Rev. I. E. Page left that circuit, he told me that he should always be thankful for the deepening of his spiritual life which had largely been the result of those meetings." Henry Fowler was a great lover of hymns, and especially of Charles Wesley's. He used to say that wherever he attended service, in any place of worship, one of Charles Wesley's hymns was sure to be sung. My sister was a great admirer of Dr. Watts's hymns, but he would always argue with her that Charles Wesley's were superior.

In a speech in Wolverhampton prior to the building of Trinity Chapel, my father gave the following description of the faith and position which he held:

"Although those present might understand it, he believed that there was no Ism so little understood by those who were not connected with it, as Methodism. John Foster, in one of his letters, called Methodists the Chinese of the religious world—they were so exclusive and, as a bit of satire, he said that they thought themselves a little above the rest of the religious world, just as the Chinese thought their Government superior to that of the barbarians. Now Methodists were neither churchmen nor dissenters. He should call them nonconformists, in that they belonged to a denomination that occupied the middle point between the two great conflicting ecclesiastical interests of this country—so constituted as to become the friends of all and the enemies of none, yet nevertheless having its disadvantages; never getting justice done to it by either one or the other of the conflicting parties, yet a great contribution to the spiritual commonwealth of the country, and binding the conflicting parties together, which was a great

advantage, little appreciated, to the great Church Catholic. Now he was quite ready to justify the position they held as non-conformists—not as dissenters, for they never dissented from the Church, they were turned out of it. That circumstance Methodists should never lose sight of. When they called to mind those great questions which surged to the surface in the present day, when they called to mind that not only their great founder himself, but also his immortal brother, with that great theologian, the power of whose argumentative ability only lost its lustre when contrasted by the side of his saintly character—John Fletcher;—when they remembered that these and Thomas Coke, the founder of the Missionary movement, were all clergymen of the Church of England, they must never forget that they could not assume the position of dissenters, without completely forfeiting their reputation as the successors of such men as those he had named, and without throwing away some of their hereditary glories. But they might be asked why did not they belong to the Church still? The answer to that was, that they were thrust out, repelled from the Lord's Table, deprived almost of civil rights; and they did not care to go back, for they preferred their own system of worship." He would tell them why he preferred that system of worship. "The Church of England is shut-up to one form of worship, we on the other hand have freedom. We have another thing which the Church does not possess, and we are proud of it and have a right to be proud of it, our glorious and unrivalled Hymn-book. That we cannot give up. Then we have the system of itinerancy—one of the strongest foundations of Methodism, and the system that welds people together, and gives a far better appointment of ministerial talent, than any other system that can be devised. The Methodists, too, have one more advantage which they ought to prize inestimably—everywhere both at home and abroad they preach the same doctrine." A former minister of Trinity Chapel—Rev. I. E. Page—wrote the following recollections of my father in those early days, which are of value in this volume because they touch a side of his character, which he would never have shown to those of his own household; and also deal with a period of which his children could have

no knowledge. "Mr. Fowler loved a liturgical service like that at Trinity, where the full Anglican service was used on Sunday mornings. He was a rather critical hearer, sometimes a severe one, but always listened with pleasure to the simple teaching of Evangelical truth, this although his theological views were distinctly broad. He was wont to say that his brains were too much on the stretch on week-days, to allow of his listening with comfort to argumentative sermons on Sunday. When the writer began his ministry at Trinity, not without dread of the wealthy and cultured congregation, the ornate building, and liturgical service to which he was unaccustomed, Mr. Fowler asked for a call from him, and said: 'We have sent for you because you preach simply; though we have a fine chapel, we do not want fine sermons; preach Jesus Christ to us; that is what we want.' The minister's mind was thus set at rest and it was a joy not to preach before Mr. Fowler, but to him. A class-meeting was held, though not regularly, where he gave his experience with the others. One meeting is vividly recalled at which he spoke of difficulties in private devotion and the need of something to start the train, as he said; reading as a preliminary the *Pilgrim's Progress* he had found helpful.

"He was at the time circuit-steward, and spoke in the Quarterly Meetings, and congregational gatherings, with great spiritual power. When the minister suggested that he should become a class-leader his reply was: 'I haven't enough religion for that.' But his address at the last Quarterly Meeting the writer attended, was accompanied with such influence that some were moved even to tears. So through the intervening years, the writer has carried the memory of him as one who lived near the heart of things, and drew his strength from Communion with the Highest. Those who only knew him as a public man, with a certain imperiousness of manner, little suspected how kind was his heart. Once near Christmas he sent for his minister, gave him a considerable offering and said: 'I am not a rich man, but want to do a little to help others; distribute this at your discretion and say nothing about it.' Another incident will reveal something of his character. One of his friends, an iron-master and a member with him of the

Sunday-morning class, had a dispute concerning the boundary between his works and his neighbour's. He placed the matter in Mr. Fowler's hands. This was Mr. Fowler's reply: 'I will spend your money with pleasure if you wish it, but if you take my advice you will not go to law. I am a lawyer, yet if a man robbed me of twenty pounds, I would rather lose the money than have a law-suit. Go and see your neighbour in a friendly spirit and try to settle it.' His counsel was taken, and the dispute ended amicably. Strong man though he was he had a morbid dread of suffering and death, and greatly disliked sermons which dealt with such topics. He once wisely answered the minister thus, after such a sermon:—

" 'I am coming to hear you on Sunday if you will not preach horrors!'

" 'If you knew how often we ministers address men for the last time you would not wonder that we warn them.'

" 'Well, I will take you on your own ground. Suppose you were seeing a dying man, and it was your last opportunity, would you preach the terrors, or the mercy and love of God?'

" 'The love of God, certainly!'

" 'Then preach *that*, it is what all men need''

Speaking to preachers, Henry Fowler once said:

"Do not reserve all your special appeals for Sunday night, and do not preach all your saint-building sermons in the morning; because there are many servant girls and others, who can only get out to a place of worship at night, and these want their souls building up; and there are many well-dressed people in a morning congregation who do not want so much building up as being invited to Christ."

Another minister in the Trinity Circuit, the Rev. Frederick Briggs, writes thus of my father:

"I shall always be glad that I lived for three years in Wolverhampton, and had the privilege of seeing a good deal of the late Viscount Wolverhampton in his private and Church life. I was much impressed with the perfect simplicity of his religious faith—his reverence for all holy things—his love of discipline, and his catholicity.

"In many conversations he expressed his strong desire that politics should be excluded from pulpit utterances. To him Sunday meant rest from the turmoil of political life, and he found that refreshment which he needed in the liturgy of the Anglican Church, which was always read at Trinity, and in a sermon upon some simple Gospel truth.

"His recognition of the Hand of Providence in his life was often manifest. On one occasion he asked me to include his personal thanksgiving, but without mentioning names, in the morning service, as he had narrowly escaped an accident during the week. On another occasion, when Lady Wolverhampton had been dangerously ill, he asked me to pray for her in the service, and afterwards attributed her recovery to the direct answer of God to the prayers of the Church. He was always most emphatic in expressing his wish that no names should be mentioned.

"He always impressed me as one who had learnt 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God.'"

In the building of the new chapels of Wesleyan Methodism, Henry Fowler yet retained his historic and traditional love for what was old and rich in association, thus possessing by rare combination the Liberal and the Conservative characteristic. Practically he was always a Liberal in progress, in policy and in reform. Naturally he possessed an historic veneration which made him conservative among the red-hot reformers who will change a thing for the worse sooner than not alter it at all. However contemptuously the word "meeting-house" might be regarded in modern days, "it should remind them of associations and circumstances of the past, from which they traced many of their present enjoyments and triumphs. In the struggles which preceded the establishment of those old meeting-houses were linked together the attainment of their present social and religious liberties. Because in point of fact the two were inseparable; they grew from the same root, they were nurtured by the same warmth, matured by the same tears, and perished and faded together. And, as Englishmen, they were indebted for their social liberties, in the main, to the religious men who, in the support of their principles, suffered, struggled and died, to secure for themselves

and for us, what was the invaluable birthright of every man, to worship his Maker in accordance with his own conscience. Therefore, that quaint word 'meeting-house,' although it might have the sound to some of what they would call the vulgarity of dissent, or be suggestive of what they would contemptuously term a gloomy bigotry, was to him the name of one of those many houses, which were hallowed with associations of the most holy and venerable character, and around which clustered the memories of some of the most honoured and honourable men in the nation's history. That word 'meeting-house' recalled to them the great battlefield of their constitution, where men acting only on behalf of their religious principles, and looking only for religious results, succeeded in obtaining, not without immense sacrifice, those great constitutional liberties which had raised England to the point she now occupied. And although that day of struggle was passed, and they now enjoyed the glorious privilege for every man to worship God under his own vine and fig-tree, the names of those quaint old meeting-houses would for ever be treasured, to remind them of the saintliness, the zealousness and the self-devotedness of their forefathers."

Yet on the other hand he advanced with the times in the desire for different buildings for the public worship. On a committee for the building of chapels, he said, that he could not help congratulating them on the fact that so large a number of the chapels, referred to in the report, were distinguished by the beauty and appropriateness of their architecture. "I know that to some this may appear an unimportant point, but I entertain a contrary opinion; and I venture to assert that the recognition and approval of that vast improvement, which has characterized our recent ecclesiastical edifices, involves a principle, which, both in its cause and events, must affect the position and the progress of Methodism. Let me be distinctly understood as not intending to cast in the remotest manner, the slightest reflection on those venerable, old-fashioned Methodist chapels, which, reared under peculiar circumstances, often amid unparalleled difficulties, and in the teeth of unbridled opposition, are monuments of a memorable past, which has endowed them with the peerless beauty of the highest and

most hallowed associations. The men who admire and appreciate those preaching-houses of the past, and regard them as among the most valued treasures of our modern Methodism, are the very men who, I think, most cordially endorse the sentiment I have now attempted to define. The characteristic of John Wesley, and, I think, in the main, the characteristic of the denomination which bears his name, is an inflexible adherence to old doctrine, old teaching, old and yet ever youthful truth, with the most common sense adaptation of all external, secondary, incidental agencies and appliances, to the peculiar circumstances and emergencies of the time. And I do not shrink from saying that what was peculiarly appropriate, in harmony with, in advance of, the requirements of the day, in 1765, or 1805, is out of harmony with, and is inappropriate in the year 1865. I do not contend that there is any special sanctity, any obligatory appropriateness in any one style, of ecclesiastical architecture. I rejoice that the Connexion generally seems to be of the opinion that there is a fitness, appropriateness, decency and order in that style of ecclesiastical architecture which for centuries, whether in the sublime magnificence of our venerable cathedrals, or the exquisite simplicity of our country churches, has been associated with our ecclesiastical history. I refuse to admit a superiority in any one aspect of those edifices which, ranging from the barn to the town hall, are supposed exclusively by some, 'to be linked with the spirit and teaching of Methodism.'" And he went on to express his hope that improved services would also be found in the finer chapels.

"There are two aspects of Methodism—the aggressive and the conservative. The one is essential to the other, and a good deal of our connexional weakness has arisen from the confusion of the two ; the one admits and justifies irregularities, which would be fatal to the other. In dealing with the wickedness, the sin, and the ignorance which still disfigure our land, it matters not what agency you employ, so long as it is successful ; but if you are in this present day—bearing in mind that it is a day of enlightened taste, a day in which cultivation and enlightenment are no longer the special prerogative of one class, but are extended through all classes—to justify your claim to a complete, eccle-

siastical organization ; if you are to rally round a devoted pastorate & devoted people, enjoying all the advantages of that relation, you must not suppose that the forms and characteristics of a purely missionary teaching, which in John Wesley's days invariably pre-supposed previous public worship, will satisfy that delight in, and craving for, sublime, decorous, reverential, devotion which is the invariable characteristic of a Christian man. . . .

“ We have a free, unfettered and faithful pulpit. I yield to no man in giving that an undisputed pre-eminence. Without that we know, as church history has always shown, that the most beautiful ritual would become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. But, whilst thankful for our pulpit, I would humbly venture to submit, whether there is not room for improvement in the proprieties and the solemnities of public worship. I am of opinion that it will be a brighter day for Methodism—a day when not only its conservative but its aggressive forces will preserve a greater power, and possess greater strength,—when our common prayer, whether it be liturgical, or whether it be extempore, shall cease to be regarded as a mere preliminary to something beyond ; when a larger incorporation of the Holy Scripture, both into our morning and our evening services, shall render to the Word of God that conspicuous reverence, which characterized alike the temple service of the Jew and the assembly of the early Christians, and when our Psalmody, expressing devoutly and harmoniously a genuine and a general devotion, shall become indeed a service of song in the House of the Lord. I will express my hope that in these beautiful chapels which are springing up in all corners of the land, furnishing as they do a legitimate ~~te t~~, not only of approved taste, but of a true and genuine Christian liberality ; providing as they do a religious home for those who, in their absence, would perhaps find a home nowhere else ; that not only in these beautiful chapels, but also in our venerable old chapels, we shall, in combination with that faithful preaching of the Gospel for which these chapels were erected, by a wise, a prudent, a careful, a discreet and reasonable attention to the various properties and departments of our public worship, render our temple services beautiful illustrations of the worship of the

Christian Church on earth, and a true type of the Christian Church above." Even as far back as 1858 he wrote on this same subject: "Our public worship ought to be and is, a truer model of that most solemn and most sublime of all human acts. The fault is with ourselves; and when we believe that our attendance in the sanctuary on the Sabbath or on the week-day, is not to hear a sermon preached, but to publicly worship the King of Kings; when we believe that we are vitally interested in, and fearfully responsible for, every particle of the solemn service, we shall make that service, in all its parts, our own. Its commencement and its close will then be exempt from the irreverent unpunctuality, and the thoughtless departure, which the commonest proprieties of social life would resent; the details of its external appearance will be distinguished by a completeness, and a costliness, which shall boldly avow in the teeth of a miserable utilitarianism, an obedience to Him Who required that the sockets of his Tabernacle should be of silver and the snuff-dishes of pure gold; and its service of song, no longer an introduction or an interval, but the noble expression of the melody of Christian devotion, by the melody of earthly music, will anticipate the perfect worship of the glorified Church."

The first missionary meeting which was held at Trinity Chapel, was presided over by Henry Fowler in 1865, and the ordinary custom of Wesleyan chapels was then undertaken of holding a missionary meeting there once every year. He never liked the holding of such meetings within the chapels themselves, though it was usual to do so. So steeped was he in ecclesiastical tradition that the incidents of a meeting jarred upon him in what he felt to be a consecrated, or at any rate, a dedicated building, and in the following words he tried to overcome this prejudice: "If a missionary meeting necessarily partook either of secular details or pecuniary or business arrangements, he, for one, should think it undesirable to hold it in a building solemnly dedicated to habitual use for the service of Almighty God; but a missionary gathering, although it still retained the secular title of 'meeting,' and although somewhat unwisely both fettered and disfigured by the formalities and liberties common to popular assemblies, yet a missionary

meeting was a religious service, and anything, no matter how wise or how good, or how genial it might be elsewhere, anything that was inconsistent with a religious service was inconsistent at a missionary meeting, which he took to be a means of enforcing obedience to the great command of our Lord: 'Go ye into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,' and stirring up their interest, their hopes and expectations, by recounting how and in what degree, and with what success, that command had been followed. He thought that missionary meetings, regarded in this light, and conducted in this spirit, were not inconsistent with the solemnities of the House of God, and he trusted, either at that meeting or at any future meeting of a similar kind in that house, nothing would ever transpire which would create in the most refined or most susceptible ear a sensation inconsistent with the stated worship and ordinary service of the Lord's Day."

The cause of foreign missions was always prominent in his mind, and he showed great practical interest in the vast mission field in which Methodist labourers were at work. But the Wesleyan Home Missions were bound still closer to his heart, and he always regarded that work as the chief glory of Methodism.

"I have no sympathy with that miserable proselytizing spirit which enumerates and contrasts the statistics of the different churches, as if they were rival commercial companies, but we must look to two sources to strengthen our position. We must first secure those who are ours by birth and education, and those also amongst whom Methodism has won its chief victories, namely the degraded and vicious poor; and if Methodism ever deserts them, then indeed will her glory have departed.

"Depend upon it our true policy is not to deal with details too exclusively, but to proclaim the great truth that we want to strengthen our Connexion in the way our fathers did—by going out literally into the highways and hedges and getting an increase in that way. No circuit is complete in its organization unless it embrace within its borders a home missionary. But we must not lose those who are ours by the absence of those influences immaterial to our aggressive Methodism, but essential to our conservative Methodism. John Wesley never claimed the title,

and never assumed the privileges of a distinct and separate church. Then Methodism was a Home Mission, and nothing else. Now it justly claims, and nobly fills, another position; and I think we have a right to demand that those advantages, which the early Methodists enjoyed, should be secured to us. I think that if we thus conserve our own, and if we, with all the simplicity and all the earnestness, and all the faith, of true Methodists, proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel to the thousands of people in our large towns, who are living without hope and without God in the world, whose life is one great blank, we shall not only secure and perpetuate that prosperity, for which we all so ardently long, we shall vindicate our right to inherit and transmit that Methodism, whose mission was, I trust is, and I pray ever will be, to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land."

At a large meeting held in Hull on the occasion of the laying of the foundation-stone of the King's Hall in July, 1909, which would probably be the last Methodist public meeting which my father attended, he spoke strongly in favour of the Home Mission movement, and pleaded for freedom from sectarianism and party politics. He said: "A large section of the population they had to admit was outside of the pale of Christianity altogether. Those people will not come to us, and, if we would bring them within the fold of Christianity, we must go to them. Thus Home Mission work is old Methodism—the Methodism of John Wesley, who went not only to those who wanted him, but to those who wanted him most."

He advocated the establishment of separate Home Missions, side by side with the Connexional movement in each local centre, by which means he thought local support would be concentrated, and a greater local success achieved, than by any centrally-directed operation. The great Wesleyan missions, like that of Manchester, were the fruit of this idea, and in them he always took the keenest, and, I might almost say, the proudest, interest. My father had a great faith in the power and the principles of the laity. His confidence in them far exceeded ~~that~~ which he reposed in any ministerial body. He judged by clear-cut, practical standards, of which the ordinary clergyman or Nonconformist minister often fell short. It was inevitable that he should, with-

out the training of the business man, the outlook of the man of affairs, and the experience of practical science, to say nothing of the vast temperamental difference between the scholar, the theologian or the visionary, and such a man was Henry Fowler. For defects of such qualities as the former's he made no allowance. The dealing with defects of any kind was not his mission. He possessed no power of healing in his touch, and had little patience with what was imperfect that he saw. But, fortunately, he was blind to the defects of the qualities which appealed to him, and never noted the imperfections of those with whom he was mentally akin. Therefore his attitude was not so critical towards his fellows as might have been expected from his intolerance of certain aspects. The Methodist ministry was, by nature of its Methodism, exempt from most of his strictures upon the clergy of the Church of England; but even in Methodism he extolled that great leaven of the laity, and he fought hard and successfully to admit the laity into the precincts of the Conference. The Methodist custom of local preachers appealed to him as a use of the laity. For mission work he strongly advocated the extension of this branch of lay activity. "He did not think they utilized their lay agencies sufficiently. The local preachers upon their plans represented, so to speak, so much of the spiritual capital of the circuits, and he doubted whether such capital were wisely invested. He thought a large, local, preaching power might be brought to bear upon the heathen population; in outdoor or cottage services, as missionaries in the large towns to the great masses of the people. As a rule, the local preachers were exerting their influence upon societies and congregations already brought in." "Laymen could preach the Gospel in the Home Missions, and he had great faith in a movement in which men of the world endeavoured to bring their own Christianity to bear upon their neighbours and to lead them to the House of God. In the Foreign Mission work all that the laity could do was to give their money, but it was not so in the Home Mission work." In these early days of Henry Fowler's life, when his religious as well as his political sentiments were in bud, there was no doubt what manner of tree he would be. The same consistency that marked his political life was equally noticeable in his

religious life. The opinions which we find expressed by him on the sunny side of fifty were but re-echoed in his later years, and the actual expression of them, though perhaps toned by maturer harmonies, was still in the same key. His characteristic in Methodism, as in politics, was that of an administrator; he was indeed a statesman of their own. He represented all Methodist interests as surely and conscientiously as he did his Wolverhampton constituents, and as far back as 1865 Sir Robert Perks alludes to their first meeting—one of the beginnings of those administrative services which my father could not help rendering.

"The first time I met Mr. Fowler," says Sir Robert, "was in 1865 at my father's house next to Wesley's Chapel in the City Road. My father, the Rev. George D. Perks, who was then the Superintendent Minister of City Road, was a distant connection of Mr. Fowler by marriage. They thought very much alike upon Methodist affairs and general policy. John Wesley, when he built the City Road Chapel towards the middle of the eighteenth century, had not the foresight to select a freehold site for his church." ("How exactly like a clergyman!" was Henry Fowler's opinion of this proceeding.) "The land belonged to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral, and when the lease lapsed, about the year I name, no little alarm was felt in the Methodist community as to the terms which would be exacted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners either for a renewal of the lease or the sale of the freehold. The Commissioners, after lengthy negotiations, ultimately agreed to sell the freehold, and that without demanding the very last pound of flesh. The arrangement of this delicate matter was among the first of a long series of services rendered by Mr. Fowler to the Church of his fathers.

"The next time I met Mr. Fowler was in 1870, at Highbury, in the north of London—again at my father's house. Methodism, and indeed Nonconformity, was split into two contending armies upon the then, as it is now, vexed question of elementary education, and it was in connection with the policy to be recommended to the Methodist Church by the special Methodist Committee then sitting in London to consider the provisions of Mr. W. E. Forster's Bill, that Mr. Fowler came to take counsel with my father. Wes

Wesleyan Methodism was sharply divided and both sides were well represented. William Arthur, the famous author of the *Tongue of Fire*, led one party. This section was opposed absolutely to the principle of Mr. Forster's Bill. They wanted the entire system of elementary education throughout England and Wales to be placed under State control and that all sectarian schools—Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic, should alike disappear. The only religious instruction to be given in these State schools was to be the Bible expounded by the teachers, who were, needless to say, to be subject to no sectarian tests. Mr. Fowler's sympathies, though modified in after years, were undoubtedly with this policy. The opposite party, led by Rev. Dr. Rigg, wished to retain the denominational schools, partly on educational and partly on sectarian grounds. They objected to the Wesleyan Methodist day schools, to the number of more than a thousand, being transferred to the State. They firmly believed that the existence of such schools was a powerful aid to the religious work of Methodism, and that their growing popularity, especially among the middle classes, was evidence of their necessity. The result of the discussions in the Committee was, as so often happens in Methodism, a compromise. Mr. Forster's Bill was approved, subject to some few amendments suggested by the Wesleyan Committee. The agreement was, as the reports show, due in no small degree to the advice given by Mr. Fowler. I well remember Mr. Fowler asking me in those early days what I would do, and, with the omniscience of youth, I did not hesitate to tell him. Mr. Fowler was not a man of war. People who did not know him well thought differently. He had a sonorous voice; his sentences were emphatic; there was not a trace of uncertainty either in his language or advice; he had a disconcerting way of handling opponents. But in spite of all this, he was a man of peace. He seldom drove his enemy to the gate. 'We have often to take not the best, but the second best,' was one of his favourite sayings. Whether it was a sound policy I often doubted, but that it was the bent of Mr. Fowler's mind is, I think, certain. It was so in Methodism and so in politics. Mr. Fowler's mind was not theoretical, but practical. He never believed in pulling down unless

he was certain he could build up. He was a constructor, not an iconoclast." I should like to add that my father's spirit of compromise was never one of principle, but merely of detail. He felt that there is a vast arena of opinion in which different men, by reason of their temperaments, must go different ways. He often said that a unanimous Cabinet which consisted of from thirteen to twenty men was an impossibility. Seeing that it is a difficult matter even to make two men view a question alike all along the line, how far beyond the range of probability would it be to expect a whole Cabinet to agree as to details. Every scheme or Bill must contain features contrary to certain views held by those who are nevertheless responsible for it to an outside public. The man who would shy and bolt at such diversities of opinion was no practical politician—he would be merely a fanatic. For instance, the members of the Cabinet who were against the initial principle of Home Rule could not remain members of it, but he would have a wide latitude for differences of detail within that principle. And again as regards finance, he adhered to Liberal principles of finance, but he could not probably have followed any other man's Budget with perfect approbation as to its details or even in all its departures. It was in this spirit that he so deeply deplored the loss of certain old colleagues who, he felt, had gone on the confusion of essentials with non-essentials. Had his spirit of compromise reigned more widely, and had others taken, with him, a wider view than that of detailed legislation, then perhaps a greater wisdom might have prevailed and a huge catastrophe been averted.

And in Church matters beyond his own denomination, these views of his were strong. The inelasticity of the Church of England had, he believed, sadly limited her powers. Nonconformity was often but a diversity of temperament, which broke away because it could not be bound in certain directions, could not be held by certain ties. He considered the uniformity of the Church of England services a weakness rather than a strength, because he felt that in religious life a man's tastes and temperament and bent of mind had to be reckoned with and provided for. And that, of necessity, what was suitable to one was uncongenial to another.

He thought that a freer hand in dealing with individuals and classes and communities would have saved the Church from many of her losses in different forms of dissent. And he specially bemoaned her conduct in letting the Methodists go, because perhaps he naturally assumed that they were the greatest loss. He sometimes discussed certain failings, as he considered them, of the Anglican Church, and I heard him wind up a severe criticism thus :

“ There is no greater proof of the divinity of the Church of England than the fact that she has survived so many of her mistakes.” But, on the other hand, he had a full comprehension of the power, and the traditional as well as the spiritual value of the Established Church. He always maintained that the greatest power in this country was the Church of England, that many underestimated its strength, because it was so seldom exercised on matters of political interest.

“ I told Harcourt,” he said, “ when he introduced his Welsh Church Bill, that he did not seem to realize what he was doing. I said to him : ‘ You have no idea of the hold which the Church has upon the English people. If you attack it you will lose your seat, and if you persist in it, our party will be swept out of power.’ He lost his seat, and no one knows how much that Bill has had to do with our being out of office all these years.”

He always maintained that one of the great powers of Methodism was its harmonious combination of the aggressive and the conservative sides. At his own chapel in Wolverhampton he had the two diametrically opposed services—the liturgical one in the mornings, which was practically identical with that of the Anglican Church, and the real old-fashioned Methodist service of extempore prayers and an immense sermon in the evenings. His chief attendance was in the morning. I do not remember his going out on Sunday evenings after I grew up, as he did not like to have his carriage out twice on Sunday and it was too far to walk ; but he would never lose a member of his church, or of his party, for lack of the liberty which holds as surely as it sets free.

CHAPTER XXVI

IN METHODISM

"Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."—II. *Samuel*.

TO write of Henry Fowler "in Methodism" is to write of him just as he was elsewhere, for he was never not "in Methodism," and therefore his religious life cannot be dissociated from his secular life in any way; though in some circumstances it was naturally more apparent than in others, and to some of his friends it was more clearly discernible, because of their kinship with him in the Church of his fathers, and also of theirs. Of these no living Wesleyan minister can speak more truly and personally of my father than the Rev. Dr. Macdonald. So many of his own generation, whose friendship with him was close, and whose knowledge of him was intimate, have also gone with him beyond our reach. But of the younger generation my father thought great things of "Fred Macdonald," and his rare visits to our home were occasions which his host specially enjoyed. In past days the Rev. George Macdonald both travelled and lived as a retired Wesleyan minister in Wolverhampton—to use a Methodist phrase he "sat down" in what was subsequently my father's Parliamentary "seat," and many memories hang round that former intimacy and *camaraderie* with the Macdonalds which were rooted in a mutual meeting-ground of brains, brilliance and Wesleyan Methodism. We, in our generation, have rejoiced in the after-glow of much of their conversation, and still treasure the stories of those good old days. Often in after years they met, and met again, in the vastly different environment of London society, and beyond a gap of many years and

varied experiences—but the old harmonies were there. Echoes of them ring through many of Rudyard Kipling's writings, caught from his mother, who was one of the Macdonalds. The following impression which Dr. Macdonald sends me of my father is singularly true and real.

"I saw very little of Lord Wolverhampton during the last twenty years of his life, though, when we met, there was always a friendliness on his part, to which I think his acquaintance with my father in earlier days contributed something. He took a warm interest in my appointment as Missionary Secretary in 1891, and when I was made President in 1899 he wrote me a letter of kind and genuine appreciation. I sometimes regretted that our paths lay so far apart as to prevent the interchange of thought in matters in which we were both interested, an interchange that, on its rare occasions, I always found pleasant and helpful. I believe that his parentage and early training not only put their impress on his character, but remained in conscious or sub-conscious form, a master-influence through life. He was a Methodist preacher's son, and remained such through all subsequent developments and promotions. He neither concealed it nor over-emphasized it, but it was there. The circumstances of his life were not such as to produce in him any narrow, clannish feeling on the subject, and in any case, his own strong sense would have preserved him from it, but I do not think he ever changed his mind as to the benefit he received from being his father's son. The stock from which he came, the definite religious belief of his parents, and the domestic life it inspired and controlled, together with the Methodist tradition that he inherited—a powerful thing in its way—these were, I think, among the principal forces that determined the essential and permanent elements of his character. He was a striking instance of a man of great powers, whose life moved through a great career to spheres remote from that in which it began, who carried with him, all but unaltered, the convictions and ideals with which he set out. ♣

"As a Methodist Lord Wolverhampton belonged to a class now rapidly diminishing. He was not easily kindled into enthusiasm by this latest feature of it, or by that, however excellent, but he

had a strong grasp of the circumstances and conditions under which it arose, of its historic place and significance, and of its relation to other religious organizations and types of the Christian life. He wished to see it prosper and grow, and sought to increase its efficiency, but he wanted it to preserve its type, and to hold the position, neither Anglican nor Dissenting, which he thought was good for its people, and for the advantage of the Christian Church as a whole. There was in him, as in so many of the older Methodists, a Church of England strain. He appreciated the historic greatness of that Church, he loved its liturgy, and stood by the Wesleyan use of it in the morning service of Methodist chapels. He did not, I believe, take much interest in schemes of reunion, well knowing the difficulties, if not the impossibilities, that stand in the way. But he strongly desired the relations between Methodism and the Church of England to be as kindly as possible, and characterized by mutual considerateness and respect. He did not apologize for being a Methodist, still less did he apologize for the existence of Methodism, to which he had given too many hostages for his loyalty to it to be questioned. But it was no part of the Methodist tradition, as he held it, to regard the Church of England with hostile feelings, or to judge ungenerously those features of it which he did not approve. He felt the blood-relationship between the older and the younger Communion, and resented bigotry and ill-will on either side. In his public utterances on this subject he showed breadth of view and Christian large-heartedness.

"Theologically Lord Wolverhampton was an unmistakable evangelical. He had a strong reverence for religious ordinances, with a corresponding dislike of looseness, levity, or showiness of speech or observance where religion was concerned. Gravity and simplicity in these matters appealed to him far more than *ad captandum* methods, either in public worship or in the pulpit. Notwithstanding his own great powers as a public speaker, he set less store by pulpit eloquence than the preaching of the Gospel in such a manner as to show the evil of sin, and the love of God revealed to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to instruct and strengthen men and women in the Christian life. I think that

like most Christian men, who have lived long, and seen much, and felt the limits of things, the essential and fundamental elements of religion became more and more to him, and that he cared less and less for the things that are secondary and subordinate.

"It is perhaps worth mentioning at the close of this brief sketch that in later years Lord Wolverhampton's great influence with the Conference was generally exercised in the direction of adjusting and reconciling opposed views of things. He deprecated the logic of extremes, and was often successful in averting its application."

All the recollections of my father from those within his Church cluster round this attitude of what the world calls compromise, and the Bible calls peace-making. The Rev. Nehemiah Curnock says: "In the Birmingham and Wolverhampton District Meeting, as it was then called, he took a leading part in our discussions on Lay representation in the Conference. His spirit and temper, I have always thought, did more even than his counsels to bring about a peaceful settlement. He never exaggerated and never exasperated.

"During the years of my editorship of the *Methodist Recorder*, I saw, or heard from him frequently. He was a true friend, not merely to me personally, but especially to the cause I then represented. His influence in the affairs of Methodism never abated, though its expression was necessarily more restrained, or at all events, less obvious. To this day very few, even in the inner circle, have any adequate conception of the debt we owed him during the anxious months of the Missionary Controversy. I have always believed—and I was constantly behind the scenes on both sides—that Sir Henry Fowler, more than any other man, saved Methodism from another terrible rent."

A younger minister very slightly known to him personally, and representing a vast number of the Wesleyan ministers to whom my father was a name rather than a neighbour, sends me the following few recollections which indicate his influence even over that outer circle with which he rarely came into actual touch. The Rev. W. C. Sheldon says:

"I never got close enough to Lord Wolverhampton; I stood

too much in awe of him. Once or twice only did he ever speak to me ; once being at the first quarterly meeting of the newly-formed Trinity Circuit, of which I was appointed Secretary, when, sitting next to him, he asked me ' if that window was open ' ? " This recollection is stamped with truth, but that it has amounted to a recollection shows how great a man Henry Fowler seemed to the Methodist public. " The other occasion was when I happened to be in the vestry on a Sunday morning when the Sunday School Anniversary was being held, I then being the General Secretary. He asked me what the school was doing to feed the Church, and delivered himself for the space of two or three minutes on that subject. The Sunday school would lose its main purpose if it failed to prove a feeder of the Church, and he enjoined the necessity of making all efforts tend to that end. It was a bit of teaching I never forgot, and I have frequently quoted it in church meetings with which I have subsequently been connected, down to the present date." Beyond any such slight individual intercourse, amounting only to a few words, he was yet a very living personality in the whole Methodist world, as is shown by the following representative statement :

" My impression and observation of him began early, and from beginning to end I had an unbounded admiration for him, both as a public man and as, what I have frequently described him, our most distinguished Methodist layman. You may measure his influence when I say, that down to the end of his Parliamentary career, my first thought on opening the morning's newspaper was to see whether there was anything in it by Fowler.

" My first hearing of Mr. Fowler was when I was quite young, and he excited my interest at once, the grip of which was never relaxed. About that time he published a lecture on the Institutions of Methodism, a most serviceable and educational little book—the kind of thing that to-day would be of infinitely more value amongst our guilds than some of the light stuff which is now their chief fare." And the same writer adds at a later date :

" Sir Henry Fowler was far too great a Methodist for small talk, but as one of the founders of Trinity Chapel, Wolverhampton, in

the early sixties, and the holder of all the administrative offices of the circuit, he magnified and dignified every office he held, and left a great example to his successor. It was an education to be trained in his school. When on yielding up the circuit stewardship, in 1878, the Quarterly Meeting did its best to express its acknowledgment, the feeling was most effectively summed up by an old local preacher, in very humble life, but a man of mental grit and humour, who said, 'We mean the thanks we cannot speak.' For an almost unexampled period Sir Henry Fowler was chapel steward at Trinity. He knew every stone and detail of the church. It was one of the joys of his Methodist life. His care for it—especially until public life drew him more from home—was devoted and touching. Nothing was done to the structure or its appointments without taking him into consultation. He was jealous for its beauty and would have nothing to mar it. Once, after a long absence, he found that an outside blind had been put up to the chancel window, but he had it taken down before the next Sunday. For the order, and beauty, and perfection, of the service he was equally jealous, and a long succession of ministers will remember his unfailing presence in the vestry, guiding and noting the psalms, collects and prayers proper to the day or the season. Society stewards might come and go, ministers might come and go, they might have knowledge of these proprieties, or they might not, and they might have the sympathy and the instinct for them, or they might not, but Mr. Fowler was always there, and with his presence and guidance he must be a clumsy man who went wrong."

My father took the greatest possible interest in the revision of the Methodist Hymn-book, and was a member of the Committee which undertook that work. Its hymn-book was the liturgy of Methodism, and he was never tired of comparing it with all other collections of hymns to the latter's disadvantage. Dr. Davison, President of the Richmond College, says: "As chairman of the Committee I felt it to be a very great advantage that Lord Wolverhampton, in spite of the many important claims upon his time, made an effort to attend whenever it was at all possible. His experience, judgment, and fine taste, helped us greatly. He did not speak much or often, but when he did speak his words were

weighty and usually decisive. The deeply reverent spirit which marked his comments upon ' various readings ' in the text of hymns, or upon the insertion or omission of verses for use in worship, was very notable. In his attitude he was Liberal-Conservative, rather than Conservative-Liberal. There was nothing narrow or sectarian about any of his views, but he had such an appreciation of the value for religion and worship of Charles Wesley's hymns, and, what I may call the Wesley tradition, that he was rightly, very jealous of any rash meddling with treasures handed on from the past. But he greatly helped those who were anxious, whilst sacredly preserving traditions, to broaden and enrich the hymnology of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

" In this—as in all his public work, if I may venture to say so—Lord Wolverhampton combined some of the best features of both the Liberal and Conservative temperaments ; but whilst in public policy, both civil and ecclesiastical, the stress lay upon the Liberal element, in literature and religion the Conservative strain came more markedly to the front."

In the handling of hymns my father was always strongly adverse to tampering with the author's rights. He considered the introduction of extra verses into well-known hymns, such as is found in some church and many nonconforming collections of hymns, an unwarrantable literary liberty. We have the following letter written by him to the Rev. Thomas McCulloch, a late President of the Conference, on this point. It was suggested that in Lyte's matchless hymn, " Abide with me," the line " Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes " contained Romish tendencies, and it was proposed to alter it to " Reveal thyself before my closing eyes." This filled my father with indignation and he wrote :

" Woodthorne,

" Wolverhampton,

" November 17th, 1900.

" DEAR MR. MCCULLOGH,

" I have read with special interest your reference to the controversy as to the alteration in the hymn ' Abide with me ' by the last revision Committee. I have fought the same

battle on the present revision. I do not believe that Mr. Arthur's theory (which is absurd if the hymn is read) as to the priest holding a crucifix was his own. I think it was suggested by a well-known lady, more distinguished by her personal character and goodness than by wisdom. The hymn is addressed to our Lord as a prayer, and He is asked in the line to which objection is taken. I agree with you, if the objection is sound, it applies to the lines, 'Simply to thy cross I cling,' 'To thy cross I look and live,' both in our Hymn-book, and also, if I may reverently make the comparison, to St. Paul's declaration, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"If, or ever, the timid and the Orange section from the Irish Conference have their way, the new Hymn-book will be disfigured by this Unitarian depreciation of the Atonement.

"Yours very truly,

"HENRY H. FOWLER."

The whole organization of the Methodist Church, together with most of its divers departments, were all under the wide wing of Henry Fowler's interest and supervision. Its magazine he loved and read each month from cover to cover, though he was inclined personally to deprecate the desecration by fiction of those historic pages.

He wrote the following letter to its editor :

"Woodthorne,

"Wolverhampton,

"November 16th, 1907.

"DEAR MR. TELFORD,

"I wish to congratulate you on the great success you have achieved in the Magazine, and I am anxious that it should be rewarded by a constantly increasing circulation. My opinion is that it is one of, if not the best, religious magazines at the present time. As I was for several years the Chairman of Cassell's, I am not quite ignorant of the

difficulties which attend the Magazine Department, and of the importance of increasing in every possible way the circulation. Having regard to the market of the Methodist public, I think you ought to aim at a minimum circulation of one hundred thousand.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours very truly,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

This unsolicited letter was a great encouragement to Mr. Telford, showing how all his efforts for the Magazine had been watched and approved.

I think perhaps Sir Robert Perks knew as much about my father's Methodism as any one. Ministers came and went, and the three years' limit prevents long intimacies in one circuit. Were it not for the *camaraderie* of Methodism—that freemasonry which greets each incoming minister as a tried friend before his trial—that limit would prevent intimacies. In Church of England parishes, the new clergyman has to win his way through a critical, and often hostile, congregation. They are suspicious of him, his churchmanship, and his ways of working, and so the first few years in most parishes is an uphill advance. But not so do the Methodists treat their ministers. A newcomer—and there is always a newcomer every three years—is welcomed straight away into the inner circle of his people. He is a brother, for is he not a Methodist? He is a friend, for is he not a Methodist? He is one of themselves, for is he not a Methodist? No further credentials are necessary—no time need be wasted reading prefaces and introductions. The first chapter is called Friendship, and the last can find no better name. There is much to be learned from these generous, warm-hearted people. I remember during the last decade of my aunt's life, who was the widow of a Wesleyan minister, she went about a great deal for her health, and spent long or short periods in different places; but in every one of them she found a circle of friends awaiting her, and their kindness, and hospitality, and accepted kinship, would have been simply impossible outside Methodism. My father often quoted this as an

instance of that beautiful brotherhood which is as admirable as it is unique.

But my father was away so much from Wolverhampton that his Methodist life could not be gauged fully there. Besides, by his very nature, he was not provincial—it was the wider public life wherein he was always to be found, and it was because of his professional and political intercourse with his old partner Mr. Perks, during so many years, that the latter is so specially able to speak of his Methodism, too. He saw it as it looked out in the world, while the testimony and tributes of others have lain within the borders of the Methodist church.

“Lord Wolverhampton was,” writes Sir Robert Perks, in a most real and living impression of the man, “the most respected and powerful layman British Methodism has ever had; and his loss severs one of the few remaining links between the Methodism of to-day and our Church in those stormy times of dissension and separation in which his boyhood was cast.

“Sir Henry Fowler was the first man summoned from the ranks of ‘the people called Methodists’ to a place in the House of Lords; and he was the first Methodist to sit in the Cabinet. Roman Catholics, Jews, Presbyterians, Independents, and Anglicans without number, had found their way both to the Peerage and the Ministry, but a Methodist—no. The very qualities which enabled Sir Henry Fowler to win his way in Methodism, were exactly those which, when he entered Parliament, brought him at once into the front rank of politicians. Sir Henry Fowler’s first advantage was that he was a powerful speaker. No organization in the world supplies such a nursery as does the Methodist Church for the public speaker. Sir Henry Fowler was never a lay preacher, but in the yearly Conference, and in the public gatherings of Methodism, he was the recognized lay orator of the Church. Long before he entered Parliament his political influence among his co-religionists was unrivalled, and all the more so, because it was seldom exerted, and then with courtesy and moderation. Although a brilliant speaker, Sir Henry Fowler seldom trusted, as some orators do, to the inspiration of the moment to clothe their thoughts with words, or to remedy the want of

preparation He was a man of indomitable industry. He never spoke without making absolutely sure of his facts. Although he never received a University education, he was a man of wide learning, and had not to acquaint himself, as many Members of Parliament have in later life to do, with the political, economic and literary history of his own and other lands, for these were the studies of his youth and early manhood. The result was that when he entered the House of Commons at the age of fifty, he went to Westminster with a well-ordered, well-stored and well-balanced mind, and was not driven hither and thither by every wind and wave of political discovery.

"Sir Henry Fowler was not an extremist; he would perhaps often have spoken with more effect if he had shown more Methodist fire. Even in the Methodist Conference, where in his palmy days he was always at his best as a public speaker, he seldom showed much of the enthusiasm which is one of the chief attributes of that Church, although his friends knew the burning fire was there. The characteristics which chiefly distinguished Sir Henry Fowler, whether as a lawyer, a Methodist, a politician, or a man of affairs, were his sound judgment, and the extreme moderation of his views. The party man cannot afford to see both sides. If he did, he would lose his sense of infallibility, and what is more serious, lose votes. Possibly it was for this reason that Sir Henry Fowler was not popular with the 'extreme left,' either in Church or State. And yet he was a man who got things done. His measures in Parliament were not always what people asked for, or even were entitled to have; but, as a whole, they worked well. The Local Government Act, which he carried through the House of Commons almost by his unaided effort, and as he sometimes used to boast, without once using the closure, has been a useful, workable charter. Sir Henry Fowler was one of those common sense men who, rather than lose everything, was content often to take the second best. He seldom attempted to gain the uttermost fruits of party victory. He was, therefore, trusted by men on both sides in the House of Commons, and nothing is more dangerous than this for a politician! But in the country, in the days of which I speak, the days of educational conflict, of Home

Rule, of the Boer War, there were multitudes of thoughtful men and women anxious to do the right, who asked: 'What does Fowler say?'

"And yet Sir Henry Fowler was not a timid man. His powerful defence of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes at the Bristol Conference of 1890, against the serried ranks of Methodist officialism; or, taking another illustration, his powerful letter to his Wolverhampton constituents in May, 1902, on the subject of Irish Home Rule, are illustrations of what I say.

"When he came to the conclusion that a project was morally wrong, and could not, therefore, be politically right, he stated his views with boldness and cogency, not always pleasant to his opponents, but infinitely useful to men with open minds.

"Sir Henry Fowler's impress is seen in almost every ecclesiastical reform in the Wesleyan Church during the last forty years. The reconstruction of the Conference upon an elective basis, and the introduction of the laity into that assembly; the statutory union of the Methodist Churches in Ireland; the conferring of the right of self-government upon the colonial churches of Methodism; the Burials Act, which secured for Nonconformists the right of burial by their own ministers in the parish churchyards, and the Nonconformist Marriage Act, both promoted by the Wesleyan Conference, and both passed through Parliament largely by the help of Sir Henry Fowler.

"He also passed a measure popularly known in Methodism as 'Fowler's Act,' which enabled trustees of places of worship to renew their trustees for a nominal sum, and practically without legal aid. He vigorously opposed Mr. Balfour's Education Act of 1902—and strenuously maintained, in opposition on one side to the High Church party, and on the other to the secularist school, the policy to which the Wesleyan Conference has always adhered, namely, that of a State school under effective popular control, within reasonable distance of every child, where the teacher is exempted from sectarian tests, and where the religious instruction given is from the Bible and not from any sectarian catechism. This programme Sir Henry Fowler defended and propounded times without number, not only in the Wesleyan Conference, but in the

House of Commons. He ardently supported two Nonconformist Relief Bills, introduced and passed through the House of Commons in 1892-95; one for the compulsory purchase of sites for Nonconformist places of worship—the other for the enfranchisement of leasehold churches, schools and manses; and in his later days, when a member of the Liberal Government of 1906, Lord Wolverhampton often expressed his deep regret that the Government could not find time to pass these two small measures, so earnestly desired by the Methodists and other Nonconformists. These are some, and only some, of the services this industrious Methodist preacher's son rendered to his Church in the State.

"It was sometimes said of Sir Henry Fowler that he was 'not a Nonconformist,' and that he was out of touch with modern Methodism. This criticism did not come from Methodists themselves. Undoubtedly his views on Disestablishment were not those of Liberal Methodism. Methodistically he was what is called an 'old-fashioned Methodist,' with a somewhat unusual leaning to the Established Church. He entertained no foolish delusions, however, about the future union of Methodism with the Anglican Church; nor did he waste his time advocating the unity of Christendom. He was a great admirer of litanies and liturgies, and was not an advocate of extemporaneous prayers nor of the sermonette. He undoubtedly attached to the formal and ceremonial part of worship far greater importance than many Methodists do to-day; but, on the other hand, no one insisted more than he did upon the preached Gospel, and no one did more than he to urge upon the ministers of his Church the necessity of raising the standard of the pulpit. And nothing was more striking than the vigorous support which Sir Henry Fowler gave to some of the most daring experiments of modern Methodism. He was from the first a supporter of Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, and the founders of the great town missions. He voted and spoke in the Wesleyan Conference for Methodist Re-union. He fought hard and successfully for the admission of laymen into the Conference. He came to the rescue of Mr. Price Hughes in his unfortunate conflict with the Foreign Missionary Society. And I most gratefully recall that, when in the Conference of 1898 at Hull, I unfolded my scheme

for raising one million guineas from one million Methodists, to celebrate the opening of the twentieth century, Sir Henry Fowler was one of the first to declare his profound belief in the practicability and ultimate success of the scheme.

"Sir Henry Fowler was a simple and devout servant of Jesus Christ. He often said to me that the difficulties of infidelity had to him always seemed greater than the difficulties of belief. He was almost too busy a man to be troubled with doubt. He was, as many scholarly men are to-day, 'content to hold tight' on to a few of the saving truths of the Christian faith. He did not often speak of personal religion, but now and then he did to me; and when he so spoke there was no possibility of mistaking the firm rock on which his own faith was built.

"The following are the closing passages of Sir Henry Fowler's brilliant speech at the unveiling of the statue of John Wesley at City Road, on March 2nd, 1891 :

" ' I would in closing, in one sentence, recall the scene around that death-bed a century ago.

" ' What was John Wesley's last confession of faith ?

" ' What was the creed in which he died ?

" ' I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me ! "

" ' What was his last hymn ?

" ' I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers."

" ' What was his last prayer ?

" ' Bless the Church and the King, grant truth and peace,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

" ' And what were his final words of thanksgiving for the past and hope for the future ?

" ' The best of all is, God is with us ! "

" ' In that confession of faith, in that litany, in that inspiring motto, you have an epitome of the Methodism which to-day reverently, thankfully and hopefully gathers around John Wesley's tomb.'

"I think I am not wrong in saying that this confession of faith, and this undying confidence in the God-given destiny of the Methodist cause, represent the deepest convictions and aspirations of Henry Fowler, the great layman, who lived and died a devout member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church."

None but a Methodist could have seen into my father's character quite so comprehensively as Sir Robert Perks has here done, because there were depths which only a Methodist line could sound, and aspects which only a Methodist appreciation could understand. But here, also, this impression carries out the fact that his religious life so mingled with his other life, that there was no dividing the two, and that he was the same man everywhere, using the same powers in the humblest meeting of his own church, as in the most momentous of Cabinets. There were causes and people who were not worth my father's while—at least, so sometimes his attitude conveyed—but the cause and the people of Governments were not such, nor were the cause and the people of Methodism either. Indeed, had these two ever wrestled as rivals, I would have foretold that the latter would have clasped him the closest, and held him with the invincible bands of his early training as well as by the tie of personal devotion.

Very shortly before his death my father saw the Rev. Arthur Bestall, who was then in the Trinity circuit, and he said to him: "My work is ended," that being the only reference he made to the closing of his life. Thus, as it were, Methodism was in his confidence, and he could to her alone whisper the secrets of his soul. I never heard him speak one critical word of his beloved Church. I never heard him express intolerance of any of its imperfections, though he was quick enough to discuss those of other denominations.

Once he went with a Wesleyan minister to hear Dr. R. W. Dale, for whom he had an immense admiration, deliver an Ordination Charge, and as he noted the Doctor's lay clothes, my father whispered to his friend: "The ritualism of Dissent!" He was very particular in his ideas about all ministers of religion wearing a distinctive clerical dress. On another occasion, after listening to an address by an old but eloquent missionary, he

remarked : " He did not use an illustration under twenty-five years old ! "

The fact that if any politician were a Methodist instantly put my father on his side. When Mr. H. J. Atkinson was contesting Hull, in the 1880 election, someone remarked that of the few Methodist candidates then standing, he was the only Conservative among them, and my father said : " If I was in Hull I should vote for Atkinson because I think he would do more good as a Methodist than harm as a Conservative."

In January, 1891, some Wesleyan deputation to Mr. Gladstone had evidently been proposed, and he seems to have written about it to my father :

" Hawarden,

" January 21, 1891.

" MY DEAR FOWLER,

" I have this morning received the enclosed letter to which, or to the deputation proposed, I should be sorry to send a negative reply, which might be misunderstood. But I certainly should be very glad if it were withdrawn. I must be very brief in stating reasons. But I am entirely unequal to the demands made upon me almost daily, from this and other countries, for this and other times, to give opinion on a multitude of subjects of the greatest interest and importance. In the matter of religious plans and movements, I am obliged to avoid, whenever I can, giving opinions, even on those connected with the Church of England.

" How can I go, when this is so, into the affairs of other Churches ? Are these opinions to be given by all who are in political leaderships (an entire novelty, as far as I know) ? Am I to do it in all the cases when it may be asked ? Or am I to draw distinctions and agree or refuse on account of theological differences ?

" The Wesleyan movement has become a great, and apparently permanent, fact of the Christian world ; and with time for full consideration of it as an historical question, I might, I think, be able to give an opinion which would not

offend ; but pressed as I am—by the cares of leadership, in a political situation altogether unexampled, as well as by extraneous matters, I am wholly unable to do justice to myself and others in such a field.

“ In Midlothian, which has the first claim on me, I avoid (and without giving offence) altogether these theological and ecclesiastical matters. Nothing but confusion seems to me likely to arise from mixing them with the responsibilities of political leadership.

“ Nor must I omit to say that I have an extreme dislike to giving cheap verbal commendation to movements in which I am unable to take a practical share.

“ I trouble you in this matter because your name is mentioned.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

I don't know what this deputation was, or what it actually involved, but the whole incident seems to me to illustrate one of the aspects of Methodism, in which lies a great portion of its charm. Methodism was born of spiritual genius. It was not evolved out of plans or principles, or dissent, or any other scheme. It came by the breath of the Spirit stirring one man, set apart by God, and he breathed that Spirit on, and Methodism was born. So there is much of the genius nature in Methodism. Take for instance its friendliness. That is no mere freemasonry, compelled by signs and shibboleths—it is a genius of friendliness—fresh and warm and free, as is ever the nature of genius. Spending itself and being spent for the sheer love of so doing, and with no thought or desire of recompense. It is to be found in no other church, or class, or community, this great brotherliness which binds the people called Methodists together, and beautifies their social as well as their spiritual life. Then, again, there is the perfect naturalness of Methodism. That, too, is born, not made. What a charm there is in its originality, and its simplicity, in speaking of things divine. Some may see irreverence or presumption, neither of which are there ; it is rather the boldness of genius which

could not be sedately timid or orthodoxly respectful. Genius has the fearlessness of youth, and it has also the simple assurance of childhood. So in Methodism we find both. Not in Methodists necessarily, but in Methodism. My father had none of the characteristics of genius, and neither have thousands of good Methodists—but it is in the Ism itself that genius lies hid, and this fact interprets some of its history, and much of its inspiration. Others outside often do not respond to these attributes; they misunderstand, they criticize, they condemn. I see in this reply of Mr. Gladstone a clear setting of this truth. The genius, as the child, never realizes that he could be in the way, and never imagines the possibility of an aloofness from his concerns. So I have seen Methodism naturally, confidently, buoyantly break down and step beyond the fences which conventionality is ever putting up, and genius is ever breaking down. Beyond these fences there may lie “fresh woods and pastures new,” but sometimes preserves are there instead. Can a child be made to understand that “trespassers will be prosecuted?” Can a genius ever be daunted by such a threat? Methodism was asking a question—we know not what—and she wanted an answer from the great statesman of the Nineteenth Century—why not, then, ask him? It is so easy to see what assurance she felt in so doing, and it is equally easy to see the notice-board fixed up, in the cold, courteous reply. Both were so natural. For the passionate Churchman could only freeze at the touch of Nonconformity, and the inspired Methodist could never doubt his welcome anywhere, either in this world or the next.

Though there were many subjects which engrossed the mind of Henry Fowler during his long and strenuous life, none lay so near his heart as Methodism, and it was wonderful how fresh his interest kept in her to the end. I am reminded by one of his private secretaries, how when dealing with his vast daily correspondence, all the letters from Methodists were put in a separate heap to be answered by himself personally. And I remember how his face would never fail to light up at the mere mention of Methodism, of anything connected with it. Often when tired lines were stencilled across his brow, when marks of vexation were cut deep in his countenance, we would purposely turn the talk to Methodism,

and instantly his whole face would change and radiate with that sunshine in which all thoughts of his church were steeped. So have I seen a woman's face shine when she watched her children. So have I seen a child's face brighten as it looked up into its mother's smile. So have I seen a preacher's face glow with the radiance of his theme. But such a sentiment, in such a practical man as Henry Fowler, was remarkable, if it was not unique. We passed it by at the time as a commonplace, as one does so many of the subtler beauties of life, but as we look back—even though as yet it be such a very little way—we see something of the genius of devotion with which Methodism had dowered this her son, and exclaim that surely his love was wonderful, "passing the love of women."

CHAPTER XXVII

“WHAT DOES FOWLER SAY?”

“He being dead yet speaketh”—*Hebrews*

“A man cannot speak, but he judges himself; with his will or against his will he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it”—EMERSON.

SIR ROBERT PERKS reminds me how many thoughtful men and women there have been in recent times of political conflict who, anxious to think and do the right, asked for their guidance: “What does Fowler say?”

I cannot help feeling that though history has settled many of these political conflicts, and though each upgrowing generation is more competent than the last to make up its own mind on every question, yet there are still, in Methodism at any rate, many such left who will like to know, and to keep, much that Fowler said about those deeper subjects of religious thought and work, which never grow out of date, because they deal not with the changing fortunes of the making and marring of Governments, but with the eternal foundations of the building and strengthening of a Church.

It is, of course, mainly the opinions of Henry Fowler, as a matured statesman, which guide and influence and help, but it is also possible to find in his earlier opinions much that was wise and strong and true. If we go back as far as 1869 we find such worthy-to-be-remembered words as the following, concerning the pastoral office, which apply for all time to those who are called to be Methodist ministers:

“I am the son,” he said, “of a man, who, if he was anything,

was a Methodist pastor. The same Head of the Church Who gave some prophets, some apostles, and some evangelists, also gave some pastors and teachers. And if ever the day comes when we, as a community, undervalue the pastoral teaching and functions of our ministry, and unduly and unnecessarily exalt any substitute for it, we shall be forfeiting our place as a Christian church. I believe that the flock is to be watched over and fed, and all students for the Ministry must learn that there are duties in connection with the pastorate of Methodism which are quite as important as any connected with the pulpit. There is also the mode of conducting divine service. We may feel strongly about that giant evil of the day called Ritualism. But there is a ritualism of disorder as well as a ritual of ceremony, and there is a danger in avoiding one extreme of falling into the other. Those who attend Methodist chapels have a right to expect not only that the ordinances shall be conducted with propriety and regularity, but also that the usages of Methodist law shall be strictly followed. As a lawyer I would like to say that there is not a chapel in Methodism settled upon the model deed, where it is not a matter of absolute law that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be administered according to the Law of the Church of England, and a Methodist minister has no more right to break that law than to preach doctrines opposed to John Wesley's 'Notes on the New Testament,' or opposed to the first four volumes of his sermons. Our system is based upon that, and I am quite sure that the more we adhere to the strict rules which fence the privileges of ministers and laymen alike, the better it will be for Methodism. I am afraid there exists a type of dissent which is not in harmony with Methodist history and is opposed to Methodist law.

"Methodism has always embraced two types of ecclesiastical thought, and let us not attempt to crush out either the one or the other. There was a Charles Wesley as well as a John Wesley. There is a hymn-book as well as four volumes of sermons. There was a Dr. Clark as well as a Richard Watson; there was a Joseph Benson as well as a Henry Moore. Some have said that they like to attend the chapels of good old Methodism, and to hear the hearty shouts of 'Glory be to God!' For my part I, too, love old

Methodism, and I like to go to a Methodist chapel where I have the same sentiment embodied in that which has been the usage of the Church in all ages—‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost’—linking the expression with the Church of the past, the present, and the future. I like a Methodist who is fond of a prayer-meeting, but I also like a Methodist who is fond of that common prayer-meeting, where ministers and people join together in using the language which has been consecrated by the piety of forty generations. Let us agree to differ on such points, but do not let us put down either one or the other, because we do not see exactly alike. Let there be no such notion as ‘The Temple of the Lord are we, and heathens all beside.’”

It is not only for Methodism that such words of wide toleration would be instructive. How many “Temples of the Lord are we” are to be found in other churches and denominations, when agreement to differ would be the wisest, best, and only solution of so many dissensions which are but a question of temperament and tradition after all.

In speaking on Foreign Missions a year or two later Henry Fowler referred with enthusiasm to the sum of £149,000 which had been contributed that year to the Wesleyan Foreign Missions. “He ventured to say that, looking at the pecuniary position of those by whom that income had been raised, and bearing in mind those costly burthens of ministerial and church organizations which had to be sustained from the same sources, and applying the only true test of liberality—the ability of the donors—it was one of the most princely offerings ever placed upon the altar of a Christian Church.” And then he went on to warn men against numerical tests in spiritual work. “Are the number of converts professing the Christian faith at all proportionate to the efforts which Wesleyan and other missions are putting forth? We may think not—but is the numerical result the true test? Is it a test at all? The index by which the nineteenth century gauges all its enterprises is figures; and the Church of the nineteenth century has, to a very great extent, adopted the same index; and we, as a section of the Church, have a voracious appetite for denominational statistics. I have no faith in, I have no sympathy with,

this system of traffic receipts applied to the development of Christ's Catholic Church. I do not believe in, I have almost a contempt for, those statisticians who divide your annual income by the number of your reported members, and tabulate the cost of conversion at so much a head. Scientific research, political forces, mechanical power, are right in testing their problems by statistics, but the progress and the conquests of that Kingdom that cometh not by observation, have ever been indifferent to, and as it were, defiant of, that pride in numbers to which we all so fondly cling. . . . The numerical test fails because the figures which it employs are incapable of denoting the results which it professes to represent, and because the time has not arrived for the sum to be worked out. With our figures we may reckon up the millions of money which missionary societies have raised ; we may enumerate the illustrious bands of missionaries they have sent out ; we may schedule their sanctuaries, their scholars and their converts ; but what those figures mean we know not now ; and the true, the final result of all our numerical calculations must be left to that day when ' a great multitude which no man can number, out of every kingdom, and people, and nation, and tongue,' shall unitedly proclaim the triumph of the Church's mission." He then went on to answer another difficulty which is ever being brought forward against foreign missionary work. " In India you have two hundred million of subjects of Queen Victoria to whom the faith and the teaching and the hope of Christianity are an idle tale. They are not an ignorant, a barbarous, and savage race, whose intellectual simplicity might render them peculiarly susceptible to the teachings of a united superior race ; their learning and their civilization date back from a remote antiquity ; their religion, enshrined in some of the most gorgeous temples which the pride or zeal of man has ever raised, is intertwined and associated with their national and domestic life. You propose to convince them that this religion is a huge imposture, and that the faith that you proclaim is the only revelation which the Maker and Judge of us all has vouchsafed to the human race. How do you set about this colossal enterprise ? What instrumentality do you employ ? You send a few men—oh ! how few—born in a distant land, speaking a strange

tongue, ignorant to a great extent of the habits and prejudices of those to whom they are sent. They have nothing but a story to tell; they have no present rewards to offer their converts; they have no penal infliction with which to coerce their foes; no miracles attest their statement, no human authority enforces their claims; and before the telling of that story, distasteful to human reason, humbling to human pride, you expect the national faith of India to fall prostrate like the walls of Jericho at the seventh day's blast. That is the argument. And the world not only covertly insinuates but openly avows its disbelief in this instrumentality. And is the Church quite free from complicity in such doubts? Is there not amongst a very large section a dim, vague feeling that if ever the world is to be brought to the faith of Jesus Christ, some agency, other than that now employed, must be brought into play, and that miraculous aid, or millennium advent, must precede the final overthrow of the powers of darkness? Now we, who profess the Christian faith, are bound to regard the simplicity and, as the world reckons it, the utter folly of our agency, as the sure sign of its power. And were the difficulties that gather in our path multiplied a hundred-fold, we are bound to accept with implicit and with active faith, the inspired declaration of the great proto-missionary when he says, that it hath pleased God to choose the weak things of this world to confound its wisdom, and that He hath ordained the foolishness of preaching as the instrumentality by which all men are to be brought to a knowledge of the truth. But I do not want to meet this doubt or difficulty simply upon that ground. Let us deal with it from a practical common sense point of view. Test it by experience, test it by history. I take it that at the present moment the power, the energy, the life of the Christian Church, is in connection with the Anglo-Saxon race. Those branches of the Catholic Church which are at this moment doing Christ's work on earth, and through whose instrumentality truth, and righteousness, and faith, and hope, and love are yielding their fairest fruits; these churches are composed of, or have been founded by, men who speak the English tongue. Whence did Anglo-Saxon Christianity spring? The Christianity of England, its Colonies and Dependencies,

is as much the result of missions—missions as we now defend them, missions as they are now attacked, the mission of a preached Gospel blessed by God's Holy Spirit—as the Christianity of Fiji or Madagascar. From the day when, twelve centuries ago, the fair-haired, blue-eyed English slaves arrested the attention of one of the Church's greatest bishops, as he passed through the streets of Rome, and evoked the wish, wittily but devoutly expressed, that spiritual light should illumine those graceful forms, down to the present hour when, from the snows of Greenland to the sunny islands of the Southern seas, from the Thames to the Ganges, and from the Ganges to the Mississippi, one ceaseless strain of prayer and praise is ever ascending in the English tongue—from that hour to this, the story of English Christianity, its foundation and its progress, its trials and its triumphs, its labours and its successes, is the story of a Mission church. Whoever else may plead exemption, England, America, Australia must ever pay their fealty to the Mission Cause. But it may be said that that is an illustration drawn from the teaching of a superior to a subject, a conqueror to a conquered, an enlightened to a barbarous race. Very well, then, let me recall another chapter of the Church's history! Recall that convict ship which, eighteen centuries ago, landed its apparently wretched cargo on the shores of Italy. Realize, if you can, the brilliancy, the wealth, the grandeur, the commercial earnestness, the military pride, the social festivities, the religious solemnities which combined to make up the national and social life of the world's mistress and the world's metropolis; and then realize, if you can, the scorn, the contempt with which the intellect and the ignorance, the wealth and the poverty of Rome, would have greeted the announcement that one of the prisoners from Judæa, lodged in the hired house, with a soldier fettered to his arm, was propounding the doctrine that the venerable religion in which the Roman Empire was cradled, reared and crowned, was a delusion and a lie; and that the teaching, the example, and the death of One Whom the Roman proconsul had condemned to a malefactor's doom, were destined to uproot, supplant, and destroy that system of philosophy and faith, which, brilliant with the noblest deeds of national glory, and hallowed

with the dearest associations of domestic life, seemed lasting as Rome itself—the world of that day, like the world of this day, the literary world, the scientific world, the political world, the fashionable world, would have laughed to scorn the folly of such a madman's dream. But we know now, reading it in the light of the inexorable logic of facts, what that Jew wrote and taught and lived ; and we know that three centuries, long, dreadfully-long to those generations who lived through their slow progress, but very short to one who can scan their story, as it were, with a glance—three centuries had barely passed from the landing of the Great Missionary Apostle, ere the faith which he preached, and for which he died, had mounted the throne of the Cæsars, and subjugated to its sway the genius, learning and glory of the Roman Empire. Was that the case of a conquering teaching a subject race ? No—as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be—the weakness of this world confounding its strength, and its wisdom, and its might. If these difficulties are brought out, let us look at them in their real stature, and see the undue proportions into which hostility and unbelief have magnified them. Let us also beware of one feeling which it is natural should arise concerning missionary effort, and that is an impatience as to time. We must learn to labour, and we must learn to wait. The waiting is the more difficult lesson of the two, and the lesson which this age, of all other ages, needs to be taught. And when appalled at the sin and the sorrow which blights so large a portion of this globe, and eager for that blessed consummation when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, we impatiently, inquisitively, almost distrustfully, ask, When shall these things be ?—there should be ever sounding in our ears the solemn command with which, from its first utterance on the shores of Galilee, down to the present time, the Church has ever been rebuked, ‘What is that to thee ? Follow thou me !’ Yes, and if we follow Him individually by ‘not being ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified,’ by manfully fighting under His banner against sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, by ‘continuing His faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives’ end,’ if we follow Him collectively in our ecclesiastical capacity, by unailing

loyalty to His teaching and unshrinking obedience to His commands, especially to His last command, 'Go ye unto all nations and preach the Gospel to every creature ;'—if we thus obey Him and thus follow Him ; if we thus look for and hasten to His coming, we shall acquire the stimulus of that expectant faith which links the work of the Church on earth with the worship of that Church above, with whose anthem of unceasing triumph has ever mingled the martyr's litany, 'How long, O Lord, how long !' Nay, more, while the Church thus works and waits, and works and hopes, and works and believes, it reverently, but yet more closely, follows Him, our risen, reigning Lord, of Whom it is mysteriously but unerringly revealed, that He Himself on the Throne of Universal Empire, is 'from henceforth expecting until His foes become His footstool.' "

Again and again do we find Henry Fowler speaking about missionaries and their glorious work, and it is as needful now, as when he spoke, to add fuel to the fire of missionary enthusiasm, for on no department of Christ's work is there more cold water thrown, even by professing Christians, than on the work of Foreign Missions.

"We estimate," he said, "the progress of events at certain times by how similar events operated in other times, and the Great Missionary report, the great Vade mecum of missionary work for all time and in all ages to come, is the Acts of the Apostles. You cannot conceive of Europe apart from its Christianity. Its proud position, heir of all the ages, foremost in the files of time, is the outcome of its Christian faith. Its civilization, its laws, its liberties, its literature, its life, are founded on the Christian revelation, and in every department of its national and individual life you discern the influence, power and the supremacy of Christian teaching ; and yet the first sermon ever preached in Europe—and remember, that was a Europe of historic grandeur, of artistic pre-eminence, and imperial domination—was preached to a few devoted women who had assembled for their weekly prayer-meeting on the banks of the river near Philippi. We have the record of two other of the missionary sermons to Europe. You have the sermon of the great Apostle, addressed to the most cultured aristo-

crazy of the most cultured city of ancient history, and you have the sermon preached in his own hired house in the obscure Jews' quarter of the empire city of the world. No miracle attended the mission. He preached precisely the same Gospel of Jesus and the Resurrection, man's sin and God's love, that your missionaries are preaching now; and I think it would be as absurd to pronounce a positive opinion upon the future of Christianity in India, and China, and Japan, by the results of simply half a century's experience, as it would have been to predict what Christianity would do for Europe, by the faith, or the powers, or the influence, of the Churches of Rome or of Philippi. I believe that our Gospel will uproot those ancient faiths and worships, which have for centuries enthralled the vast populations of the East; because I know that it fought and conquered the far more powerful faiths which composed the religion of the ancient world; and if the banner of the Cross is to float triumphantly, as I believe it will, over Benares and Madras, over Delhi and Calcutta, it will be because it floated triumphantly over Athens and Antioch, over Corinth and Rome. The Anglo-Saxon churches have at this moment set before them such opportunities of widespread universal missionary enterprise as have never been afforded either to the Church collectively, or to any one section of it, since the first great missionary command was given. And yet with all this affluence of opportunity there is one need which all missionary societies feel. What is it? It is not money. You can always get money in this country for a good cause. What you want is men. The noblest monuments of missionary enterprise are the monuments of men, not of expenditure. A man with a sling and a stone has done more for the Lord's side than many a well-disciplined host with the best-equipped artillery. We want the churches to feel that the gift of a man is the grandest gift they can lay on the altar; we want the societies to recognize that a man is the most precious donation in their treasury. I think there are few scenes in modern biography more admonitory, more truly sublime, than that which is described in the life of the late Bishop Pattison, where, in the Devonshire country home the grand old judge—one of the most learned, impartial, merciful, wise, Christian men that

ever sat upon the English Bench—gave up his son, his only son, the son of his old age, the heir of his honoured name, and, with a full consciousness that he would see his face on earth no more, devoted him to mission life. I think that noble father and that noble son have left for all the sections of the Christian Church a grand example of missionary heroism, which reached its true consummation when, following the example of his nonconformist predecessor John Williams, of Erromango, the martyr Bishop of Melanesia joined the noble army of martyrs. How are you to get the men? You cannot buy them—thank God for that!—there is something in this age you cannot buy. There is no stipend that can compensate a missionary. You cannot reckon up what he is worth. How are you to get them? Our blessed Lord has given the answer in, to my mind, one of the most mysterious passages of the whole New Testament. As His omniscient glance, not limited to the hill-sides of Judæa, but sweeping down the generations, saw the countless millions of the human race, weary and worn and faint, scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd, running hither and thither in search of some path which should lead to peace and happiness—as His pitying eye surveyed that sad procession of sin and suffering and sorrow, He taught His Apostles and His Church for ever their duty in the sight of that awful need: ‘Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into his harvest’, and when the Church has faith enough to obey her Lord’s command, the day will already have dawned which shall witness the eternal harvest home.”

Henry Fowler had a word to say about the accommodation for the poor in the newer Wesleyan chapels. He said he noticed “that there was a tendency rather to forget the just claims of the poor, and that in a great many of their modern chapels there was not the proportion of free seats which there ought to be, and upon which the strength of Methodism to a large extent depended. If they once got blinded with the notion that chapels were to be sources of income and nothing else, there would be an irresistible tendency in the trustees to develop the pew system too largely. He should not fear the experiment of a free Methodist chapel. He was not at all sure that it would not be a great

success to have a chapel without a single pew rent in it. A great many would no doubt say that they could not support the ministry, but they had to grapple with the great question of the evangelization of the masses. He believed that Methodism was calculated to deal with the masses of the population quite as well as any other system, but he was afraid that in their large towns they were not giving it fair play. In all their buildings they should insist on a certain number of seats being reserved for the benefit of the poor, and that they should be as good as any other seats, and they would find that although they might lose in the rent of their pews, they would have a result in another balance-sheet, which was ten times more important than all the trustees' receipts and expenditure that ever were put into type."

In speaking to Methodists at a general Education Committee just before the Education Act of 1870, he said, "He was a very strong anti-denominationalist; but whether denominationalism were good or bad, it would be a gross breach of the public faith if the men who had advanced the money and built the schools were to be deprived of their property. He did not believe that the Methodist body would establish any new denominational schools, and he did not think it desirable that they should. He thought it much more desirable that they should throw the weight of their strength and influence into the proper development of what he verily believed would be the schools of this kingdom, viz., school-board schools. Some one had asked whether they would rather have the education of the children of this country handed over to the Church of England, or have a purely secular education. He would say deliberately that he would rather that the children should be handed over to the clergymen of the Church of England. He maintained that the Methodists as a body had never dissented from the formularies of the Church of England, and they were in a false position if they got on the same platform with their non-conformist brethren, who conscientiously objected to the formularies of the Church of England. If they ever became political dissenters, they would have to trample upon all the traditions of Methodism, and abandon those principles which had been the secret of their success for a century and a half. Therefore, at this

crisis, let them not take a position antagonistic to the Church of England. Let them not surrender one of their privileges, rights or claims ; but not oppose anything and everything because it might give the clergy of the Church of England influence over the education of the children of this country."

This statement concerning the formularies of the Church of England is an explanation of the fact, which may have puzzled some, that my father was married in the Church of England, that he was a communicant of the Church of England, that he had his children baptized and confirmed in the Church of England, and that, following his own precedent, he was buried according to the rites of the Church of England.

At the first Conference to which lay representatives were admitted, in 1878, my father said : " I want to ask this Conference, in both its sittings, whether they do not think that the real inner life of the members of our Church, as exemplified in their every-day world life, and their church life, does not compare favourably with the past ; and whether we ought not to raise a note of thanksgiving for the living, vigorous working faith and life of our people ? To my mind, the supreme and final test of a falling or rising Church, as tested by its individual members, is personal love and attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe at this moment there is a deeper love, a more entire devotion to our Lord in this land than there ever was in any land, or at any period of the Church's history, since our Lord ascended to Heaven."

He spoke also of the danger of broken or irregular attendance at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in words that still have their application : " I believe if that Sacrament were more honoured amongst us, it would produce a robustness, a vigour, a piety, and a charm about our office-bearers and members in their daily Christian life, which would have its reflex action through all our institutions, make the Church more holy, and more certainly assure the conversion of the world."

The Sacrament of Holy Communion was to Henry Fowler a true channel for the gift of Grace, which was to him the main power of all spiritual life. He looked upon it as something far more than the commemorative Feast, he looked for in it that

promised outpouring of the Spirit of God, which is granted only to those “who in faith eat His Flesh and drink His Blood.” He believed in the outside power of Grace, which is above and beyond all feelings and convictions, and desires, on the part of man; and I have heard him say in speaking of the reformation of character: “However much a man may long to reform, however deep his penitence, and firm his resolutions, all will avail nothing without the gift of Grace.” And he strongly deprecated, as shown above, any disregard of that great Service through which he believed it to be peculiarly bestowed.

At the dedication of the house attached to City Road Chapel, where John Wesley had lived and died, and in which my grandfather also died—no other minister having ever died in that house—Henry Fowler spoke with perhaps even a deeper personal interest than that which he felt in all the institutions and ceremonies of Methodism. Having referred to this special individual link with the old preacher’s house, he went on to say: “This is a celebration of what I may call John Wesley’s personality, even more than John Wesley’s work; and to my mind there is something very attractive and very suggestive in what we are doing to-day. There is no record, no remains, in any shape or form, of luxury, of splendour, or wealth, in this house. There is to my mind the dignity of simplicity and the simplicity of dignity. I was thinking this morning that it suggested another great member of the same family. Many of you may have seen the bedroom in which he died at Walmer Castle. He lived in the same simple, hard, unluxurious state, with a narrow bed in which the Great Duke said he never turned, because when a man wanted to turn in his bed it was time for him to turn out. That is eminently a Wesleyan saying. But this house, telling us as it does, of John Wesley’s self-denial, of his want of the wealth of this world, of the simplicity in which he lived, and the simplicity in which he died—this house and this chapel and the tomb behind, are not John Wesley’s monument. We must not associate that idea with them. John Wesley’s work, John Wesley’s life, John Wesley’s death are mightier monuments than anything that can be found in the England of to-day. His monument is to be found in the

people of England, in the Church of England (I mean the Church of England in which he lived and in which he died), and in the other branches of the Church in England outside that community. His monument is to be found there. It is to be found in the religion of England. It is to be found in the history of England, and you will find that the great historians, who have written from the purely secular point of view, men like Macaulay, like Lecky, and like Green, have pronounced eloquent criticism and eulogism on, and have dissected and detected, the great influence which John Wesley exerted in the history of his country a century ago, and which he is exerting to-day. This is a great age of statistics, and we Methodists are very fond of statistics. They are all very well in their way. But there is one thing about John Wesley that you cannot schedule, and that is the permanent and widely-extended influence of John Wesley. You will find it in all the Churches. You find it in all the professions. You find it in politics. You find it in art and literature. You find that strain running through English life, and to an extent that I think no other strain, of what may be called a denominational character, has ever reached. It pervades the nation. I am, of course, alluding to a large number of people who are not Methodists now, and perhaps have not been for a generation or more; but nevertheless the fact remains; and if I could tell you of the extraordinary people who have been connected by birth or alliance, or in some way or other, with the parent stock, you would be astonished at the chasm which now separates men from what their forefathers were before them. There is still another point of more importance, and that is that the religious influence of John Wesley is not confined to Methodism. I remember William Bunting, one of the greatest of his followers, preaching at one of the Hull Conferences, and, after having rendered a tribute to other churches and other creeds, he said: 'You Methodists think that there is no Methodism but your own, but there are far more Methodists outside Methodism than there are in it.' That, no doubt, was a hyperbolical way of stating a plain truth. But you have the influence of Methodism in every church, in every denomination, and you have men who, in one sense condemning it, will tell you it has been the parent of all

the religious movements of the last century, and of this century. I think you see it in the general tone of religious opinion outside Methodism. You see the effect of that teaching, that revival—it was John Wesley's own word—the revival of primitive Christianity. It was that revival in the eighteenth century which has been such an inexpressible boon to the nineteenth century. Now may I say a word upon the relations of John Wesley to the Methodism of to-day. When I was a boy there was a phrase very much used which you never hear nowadays: ‘Our Venerable Founder.’ Would that be applicable to-day? Methodism has relations to the church, and to the world, which did not exist in the days of John Wesley, and it is pure speculation to say what John Wesley would have done if he had been alive. The only thing we can say of him is this—he would have done what he always did when he was alive,—he would have adapted himself to the day in which he lived, and used the instrumentalities and institutions available for the work he wanted to do. He was in advance of his age often, he was always abreast of his age, and never behind it, and I think the probabilities are that he would have done very much what his sons and successors have done. Canon Gore in his ‘Lectures on the Ephesians’ has dealt with St. Paul as the founder of different Churches; he says the founder of a church is the gatherer in of converts, and an organizer of institutions, and I do not think we can have a phrase in which to describe what John Wesley was in his relation to Methodism, better than that. Methodism has grown, and there is no power either in the Church or in the world to prevent its growth or its development. We do not hold that ecclesiastical or secular history is a chapter of accidents; we recognize that there has always been a divine control running through the whole course of history from the earliest days. You cannot exclude that element from the Christian Church. We are always quoting that line of Browning's, ‘God's in His Heaven—all's right with the world.’ The same principle must prevail in the Church. It is impossible to deal on merely human grounds, and to apply human reasoning to the development of a great church like the Methodist Church in England and throughout the world. I should like to refer to another point with

reference to the Methodism of to-day, that it still retains, and I hope will always retain, the unique position which John Wesley laid down for it, and which if it ever abandons, it will make the most gigantic blunder, namely, the principle that Methodism is absolutely neutral, that it is the friend of all and the enemy of none. Methodism is an aggressive church, but it is not a proselytizing church; it is a missionary church, but it is not a militant church, it has no desire to obtain converts from other churches. That is a Methodist principle. They are the friends of all that is good, and they recognize what is good in the aims, in the opinions, in the institutions, in the work, of other churches, although they may think that it is not the best way. But that is not the question before them. The work is being done, and they are to bless and not to ban any or every other church which is doing Christ's work in this world. There is one other word I should like to say. It is this, that Methodism must never be a political organization. Our very strength, the strength of members, of institutions, of men—aye, and you cannot despise it in the present day—the strength of wealth and political influence—that very strength is a danger and a temptation. We may say, looking at this magnificent machine, 'How desirable to put it on the side we think is right!' Now I am a very strong party man. I am ready to fight for my political opinions anywhere and everywhere, but I do not want Methodists to help me to fight for them. I know men, far better Methodists than I am, who hold totally different opinions from mine. They have a right to those opinions, and they have as much right to say the world would be better if their views were adopted, as I have to say that I think it would be better if my views were adopted. The Methodist Conference must hold the balance perfectly level. If it inclines either to the one side, or the other, the Methodist people will begin to do the same. I do not deny that there may come times when Methodism ought to take part in a political crisis, such as was fully justified in the Slavery question. But those occasions are very rare. I therefore take this opportunity of saying these words of caution as one who is himself inside the very world to which I do not want you to come as a body, and from which I hope you will as a church

for ever stand aloof. I have no doubt so long as the Methodists of to-day uphold the great principles of John Wesley's work, of John Wesley's life, of those guiding lines which he laid down for those who were to follow him in the higher regions of Christian thought and Christian work, we can face the altered conditions of to-day, we can with perfect loyalty to him adapt our instruments and our institutions to the needs of to-day, and in doing that we shall render the best and the most undying homage to his name.”

The opinions which my father expressed with regard to Methodism and politics are emphasized by a note I have from the Rev. William Perkins, describing one of the last conversations on Methodism with one of its ministers in which my father took a part.

“I visited the late Lord Wolverhampton,” writes Mr. Perkins, “on the 14th March, 1910. I spent more than an hour with him in his library in close conversation. He seemed deeply concerned as to the present condition of Methodism and as to its future. The two points on which he dwelt with great force and clearness were : (1) The political character which Methodism seemed to be assuming ; (2) The socialistic teaching given in many of its pulpits, and also in speeches and pamphlets by prominent men. At the time I saw him he was strong in his purpose to attend the Conference of that year at Bradford, in order that he might make a statement to the Conference in the form of a protest. I was struck by his deep interest in the affairs of Methodism, his regard for its welfare, and his keen perception of perils by which it was threatened from within itself. His strong objection to political opinion on the part of its ministers, and to the endeavours made to associate it with a party, was the more striking, because it had reference to the political party of which he had been a life-long supporter, and in which he held Cabinet rank. He spoke very earnestly and highly of an earlier and stronger Methodism which he had known in years past. I carried away with me a life-long memory of the courtesy and confidence which he showed towards myself.”

In 1890 Henry Fowler spoke on the Forward Movement of Methodism at the annual Home Missionary Meeting, also held at City Road Chapel. He said : “This Society brings before us on occasions like the present the kind of work to be done and

how it is to be done. Now, one of the cant phrases with which we are all familiar is 'the problems of the day.' Everybody can call our attention to some problem that he is anxious to solve, and to some problem to which he thinks the attention of the public should be directed. We have political problems, we have social problems, we have economical problems, and we have educational problems. I am not going to belittle any one of these interesting controversies, they are all characteristic of the age; they are all full of the deepest interest to the community at large; but to-day, and in an organization like ours, we have to deal with a problem which we believe to be the one underlying all others, and to which we attach supreme importance. This problem is the relationship or the attitude of the working classes—by which I mean the bulk of the nation—to Christianity at the present moment; and the attitude of the Church (and I use the word in its broadest form) to the nation, and the best means for carrying out what I believe to be the Church's highest mission and most pressing duty—namely, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor—the evidence which our Lord was pleased to select as the crowning evidence of His own mission, and which is still, and will be, the evidence of the true mission of His Church through all the ages. This problem differs from the political, the industrial, and the educational problems in this respect: these are all arguable and disputable, whereas in the case of the problem on which I am speaking, we take our position upon entirely different ground. We maintain that the position of the church is not that it is desirable that men and women shall be Christians, not that it is advantageous to them to be so, not that it would be an advantage to society, but upon the absolute truth of the sole supremacy of the religion of our Lord and Saviour. I shall speak shortly on points on which there may be great elasticity, but we can have no compromise here. Our position is this: that the true and only basis of morality is the fruit of one tree; and we hold that the very essence of a man doing his duty is in performing it with the belief in the existence of another world, where he will be held responsible for the manner in which he does his duty here. We hold that this principle is at the root of our legislation, and all our policy, and our relationships in life.

I notice in a weekly paper an article written by a distinguished statesman to the effect that the Gospel has been, and is, the charter of human freedom. That is the verdict of a man who has lived in the atmosphere of statesmanship for more than half a century. We take our stand on precisely the same ground; and with that we go forth to meet the working classes of the country, telling them that it is the only compass by which national life can be steered; we take our stand upon the Divine authority of the religion which we profess and teach, and with this in our hands we have to deal with the various problems of the day. What is the principle upon which our Society, as Methodists, was founded, and what was the object of our Founder? It was to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land. The means might vary, the machinery might vary—the machinery ought to vary, and it will vary; but nevertheless our object must be, in the words of John Wesley, 'the spread of Scriptural holiness'; and to bring Christianity home to the hearts and lives of the population of this country. I have been reading, to some limited extent, in the department of periodical literature—I refer to the weekly religious press, which I sometimes read, generally for information, sometimes for amusement; and I find there indications—and I know also from my own knowledge—that we, as a Church, have embarked on what is called the Forward Movement. As Methodists, and as Wesleyan Methodists, we ought all to be supporters of any and every Forward Movement. The most marked characteristic of John Wesley was always the distinguished statesmanship with which he dealt with the problems of the day before him with the means ready to his hand. He adapted the machinery to his surrounding circumstances. He hated stereotypedness; he had great contempt for ecclesiastical rigidity; and, as we are following in his footsteps, we must act in a like manner by giving up rules and practices, however time-honoured and excellent for years gone by, for methods which are required consequent upon a change of time. A greater than John Wesley has laid down that rule, for St. Paul has said, that he became all things to all men if by any possibility he might win some."

Henry Fowler then proceeded to compare the religious and

civil life of the eighteenth century and the times of Wesley with those of our own, and pointed out how the great Founder of Methodism adapted himself to the circumstances and needs of the period in which he lived. "We are now entering upon the last decade of the present century, and the ninety years which have preceded it have had no parallel in the moral, social, and religious history of the world. We are face to face with preaching the Gospel to the poor, with the spirit of intellectual inquiry and culture, which never existed in the preceding century; and we have also to deal with democracy (I do not use the word in its political meaning); Wesley and the early Methodists knew no more about these things in those days than we know of the internal economy of China or Japan at this moment. We have to face the question of capital and labour at the present time, and to deal with other questions as well, and in these matters we are able to go back to the highest type and example of all, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who not only preached the Gospel, but 'went about doing good;'—which was not that kind of good that is understood in conventional, ecclesiastical phraseology, but assuaging the sorrow and misery of human life. Do we really believe that the best thing that could happen to the Queen's dominions throughout the world, would be for them to be, in the highest sense of the term, Christian dominions? That I believe to be the faith of the Christian Church; and it is as we act up to that faith, and regard such principles as strong enough for our commerce, for our relationships as masters and men, employers and employees, as politicians, merchants, and manufacturers, that our faith will be realized. If Christianity is not good for everything, it is good for nothing. I maintain that the Forward Movement in Methodism—I will not individualize it, but take it as a whole—recognizes the facts to which I have been calling your attention, and with the means in its power has endeavoured to grapple with them."

On the unveiling of a statue erected to commemorate the centenary of the death of John Wesley, Henry Fowler said: "Seventy years ago the ablest of John Wesley's biographers wrote these words: 'There may come a time when the name of Wesley will be more generally known, and in remote regions of the

globe, than that of Frederick the Great or Catherine of Russia.’ That day has come. In the remoter regions of the globe, the vast extent of which never crossed the brain of Southey—the remoter regions of a greater Britain than John Wesley ever knew—the name, the history, the crimes of the Prussian despot or of the Russian Empress are absolutely not only forgotten, but unknown history—the name, the influence, the power, of John Wesley are a living and effective force. It is right to cherish the memories of men whose lives, whose example, are among the most precious possessions of churches and of nations. Heroes, saints, martyrs, we all delight to honour, but they are gone—their work is done, ‘well and faithfully done.’ ‘Good and faithful servants,’ they have ‘entered into the joy of their Lord.’ But we do not celebrate a memory to-day. John Wesley is a greater force in the nation to-day, in the Church to-day, than he was one hundred years ago. We have not yet to write the last line of his epitaph; we have not yet to put the top stone on to his monument; he influences powerfully and effectively our national history, our national character, our national position. We shall best discharge to-day’s duty by looking more at the work than at the man. His work stands out in the history of our faith, in the history of our nation, as clearly as the dome of St. Paul’s stands out on the horizon of London. Let me go for my evidence not to one of John Wesley’s friends and admirers, but to one who has little sympathy with John Wesley’s creed, a man who looks upon John Wesley’s work with a cool, discriminating eye, a fair, impartial historian, the greatest perhaps of living historians, I mean Lecky. ‘Although,’ says Lecky, ‘the career of the elder Pitt, and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry, form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they will yield, I think, in importance to that religious revolution which had begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitfield.’ Now why does a secular historian give Wesley’s work thus political pre-eminence over even the work of the Government of Lord Chatham? Why does he give it to John Wesley? Because that religious revolution was in the highest sense of the word a political revolution. It has affected, it has controlled, it has dominated

our national policy. Two great men in the eighteenth century were contemporaries, Voltaire and Wesley. You trace the influence of Voltaire through the French Revolution—for that Revolution was practically originated by him—that influence is seen to-day in the legislation, in the government, in the morals, in the irreligion of France. The same description can be applied to Wesley. We trace his history through the same period of time, and we see his influence to-day in the legislation, the government, the morals and the religion of Great Britain. And if we take the range of the century, if we grasp the results of these two men's teaching, through the generations which have flitted across the human stage since they left this world; I say boldly that if this world were all—if this world, with its physical happiness and its physical suffering, was the limit of the comparison—I say that the teaching of the one has been as great a blessing as the teaching of the other was an unmitigated curse. And the great English historian of the present generation, J. R. Green, has said: 'The Methodists themselves are the least result of the Methodist Revival.' The result of that Revival, the noblest result was 'the attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the immorality, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation, of the profligate and the poor. The church was restored to life; a new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave trade, and gave the first impulse to national education.'

"Wesley preached, Wesley taught in his chapels, in his class-meetings, in his journals, in his practice, the true application of the great saying of Burke, 'that whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right.' From the day that John Wesley, as a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, visited the poor degraded prisoners in Oxford gaol, to the last days of his life, when he wrote his final letter leaving his dying testimony against the most execrable of all human villainies, the slave trade—John Wesley never faltered in attacking cruelty, ignorance, intemperance—in alleviating all the forms of sorrow and suffering, and in upholding the Christian man's obligation to bring his Christianity into his daily performance of public duty in all its branches. What

was the result of such a Gospel as that, the result of the position of the English mind, of English public opinion, through the great cataclysm of the French Revolution? If you refer to your history you will find that there was an attack all along the line on property, on authority, on morals, on religion—and England escaped. Why? I believe it was the Methodism of the lower classes, the Methodism of the middle classes, their intense antagonism to anti-Christian teaching, which saved the nation and the constitution of England; and during the century that is now drawing to a close, gradually, slowly, but surely, the teaching of the New Testament is becoming year by year a stronger force in our national life—stronger far than when in her proudest days the undivided Western Church dominated the thrones and principalities and powers of Christendom. John Wesley’s Methodism ‘hid the leaven in three measures of meal,’ and, to-day, without distinction of class, or party, or creed, our public life is being leavened with that blessed influence. To-day—I say it as a politician—as a Christian politician—the strongest argument to the final court of appeal is not pride, not revenge, not aggrandizement, not gain, but, ‘Is it right?’

“Let us never forget what Archdeacon Farrar has so powerfully brought before us this morning, that one of the noblest features of John Wesley’s Methodism was the abstinence of bigotry, of sectarian rivalry, of ecclesiastical animosity. His catholicity was limited to no church and no creed. I think one of the most typical instances of this in his later life is to be found in the anecdote that, on All Saints’ Day, one of the feasts of the Church which he always reverently observed, he mounted the pulpit and in solemn silence, in meditation, in prayer, to the astonishment of his congregation, he remained for several minutes. Then, as giving expression to the thoughts that had passed through his mind, he gave out that noble lyric of his brother’s which sums up the Communion of Saints in the words:

‘Come let us join our friends above
That have obtained the prize,

* * * * *

One family we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.’

"High churchman as he no doubt originally was, declaring as he did within two years of his death that he had never varied in any point of doctrine from the church in which he lived and in which he died—he held out the right hand of fellowship to all who feared God and worked for righteousness. Read his wonderful comment on the teachings of the Great Emperor Antoninus ; read his prediction that that enlightened heathen would be among those who sit down in that Kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when many professing Christians will be shut out. I am old enough to remember that one of the favourite domestic books of devotion of the former Methodists was John Wesley's abridgement of the work of the Roman Catholic Saint, Thomas à Kempis. He held out the right hand of fellowship again to orthodox and heterodox nonconformists. He declared that Methodism required of its members no conformity either of opinion or mode of worship ; one thing only was required, namely, to fear God and to work righteousness. I think his last definition of the test of admission into the Methodist Society was this : ' Is the man a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ ? Is his life suitable to his profession ? ' He hated controversy although he was continually involved in a great deal of it. And we claim to-day to be his true and faithful followers. If we inherit but the smallest portion of his spirit, we shall claim to be ' the friends of all, and the enemies of none.' His conflict was with vice, with ignorance, with intemperance, and with sin. His motive and his aim were to destroy the works of the Devil, and all who are fighting that battle—no matter what uniform they wear—are the comrades of ' the people called Methodists.' "

Much has been written and said about what my father did for Methodism, but I should like to add something about what Methodism did for him. I have already said that his love for Methodism was that of a son for a mother, and Methodism was most truly a spiritual mother to him. The debt to motherhood can never be reckoned up, and therefore we can but hint at what Henry Fowler owed to Methodism. That he was cradled in it, brought up in it, impressed by it in the impressionable days of youth with a stamp which even fourscore years could not blur

or efface, is yet but a portion of the influence which it exercised upon his whole being. The influence of motherhood lies not only in the guiding, training, teaching, controlling, but in a far closer tie. The nature of the mother is infused into the spirit of the son, and it was this more subtle bond, this merging of the Methodist type of religion with the man's characteristic religion, to which my father owed far more than words can ever picture or even imaginings can reach.

What he was as this mother's son we know. What he would have been had other spiritual parentage directed his character, we can only guess; but this I think is clear, that Methodism supplied to him just those ingredients which the natural man lacked, and so helped to make far more perfect the whole. There is in all natures a germ of religion; there is in many natures a genius for religion. I believe that my father was one of the latter, and that, to whatever church he belonged, he would still have been a religious man; but I also believe that much of the freshness and strength of his soul life, its mellowness, and its simplicity, he owed to his inheritance of Methodism. Had Henry Fowler been born and bred in an established church the strong response in his nature to establishment might have hardened in Erastianism. His instinct for ceremonial might have grown into formalism; the Church life might have been lost in the State life, and he might have been only a statesman on the first day of the week as well as on the other six. But Methodism does not so train her sons. She is so unconventional, so home-like, so simple, so informal. She gathers her children about her, instead of marshalling her forces, or teaching her senators wisdom. And it often struck me how, whatever had been the history of the week—however great its work, or momentous its interest, with whomsoever he had been brought into contact of the greatest of the land, yet my father came back to his Sunday services with a simplicity, a confidence, and a contentment which only can be found at home. The son of distinction is ever a boy to his mother, and Henry Fowler always brought, on Sundays, to his Methodist chapel, the faith of a little child.

By nature he was a reserved man. A reserved religion might have congealed that reserve into a dumbness about holy things.

But Methodism is not reserved. She speaks quite freely and naturally, and so he learned from her to let his eloquence beautify the regions of the spirit, as well as the tracts of the intellect and mind. By nature Henry Fowler was never of the "hail-fellow-well-met" type. Might not his aloofness have cramped his character if the blessed brotherliness of Methodism had not swept over it with a flood of fellow-feeling for all the people who were called by that name?

He was a serious man—a Puritan by birth, but to Methodism he owed his sense of humour which leavens so many of the lumps of life. He even went so far as to say that to have a perfect sense of humour you must have a drop of Methodist blood in your veins. But at any rate he appreciated that very subtle and peculiar nonconformist humour, which is especially to be found among Methodists and their descendants.

He was also an intensely practical man, and a man who would naturally have gauged effort by its results. Had he never been led along any other way than the high road of utilitarianism, he might have become encrusted by a commercialism which looked no higher than common sense and won no further than worldly success. But Methodism enfolded him with her ideals, with her radiant unworldliness, with her practical mysticism, and his whole nature was elevated and illuminated and purified; so that, clear through all his practical administration, glowed the higher appeal to what is right, and noble, and true. Loud through all his speeches, and they were many, rang the tone that makes for righteousness, and the truth that touches the heart.

Such were some of the benefits which Methodism bestowed upon her son. But there was still something above and beyond all these. It was in Methodism that Henry Fowler's spiritual life was born, nurtured, and developed. It was in her that he found "a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven;" it was to her that he owed his familiarity with holy things—his highest, best and most immortal interests, and of her he could most surely have testified before he passed beyond her portals, "This is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven."

CHAPTER XXVIII

DOMESTIC LIFE

"The glory of children are their fathers"—*Proverbs of Solomon.*

"He is happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home"
GOETHE.

"How well I know what I mean to do
When the long dark autumn evenings come—
I shall be found by the fire, suppose,
O'er a great wise book, as becometh age,
While the shutters flap as the cross-wind blows,
And I turn the page, and I turn the page"

BROWNING.

ALTHOUGH my father derived deep interest and much enjoyment both from public and from social life, though he loved his Church and gloried in her service, yet I think it was in his domestic life that he found his truest happiness. His devotion to Woodthorne amounted almost to a passion, though it was a house which he had built in his earlier days, and one perhaps hardly suited to the position which he made for himself later. It would have shown no snobbishness on his part, had he felt that he had outgrown the home of his thirties, and that he wanted a larger and more imposing dwelling-place. But he never did. He loved every stick and stone in the place; and always returned to it—after a short or a long absence—with renewed delight.

But that was one of his finest characteristics. He never outgrew anything or anybody. The ties that he formed as a young man with his way to make in the world, were the ties that held him as a Cabinet Minister: the house that he built as a rising solicitor, was the home that he loved after he became a peer.

One of the most pathetic things in the last weeks of his life—after his mind had already become clouded by the approaching shadow, and he no longer recognized his surroundings—was his constant cry, “I want to go to my own home ; I want to go to Woodthorne!”

Not that he ever imagined or pretended it to be different from what it was. He never imagined, or pretended, anything. He loved Woodthorne as a home ; but he never thought of it as a “place.” When he was first raised to the peerage, and had not yet selected a title, many of the newspapers suggested that he might take the title of Lord Woodthorne. “Lord Woodthorne, indeed,” he exclaimed, “what nonsense! I’d as soon call myself Lord Darlington Street.” (It was in Darlington Street that his offices were situated.)

As he was bound up in the home, so the home was bound up in him. He was the mainspring and the centre of everything, and every arrangement was made with reference to his wishes and convenience. My mother certainly had no life, and no interests, apart from his ; and if we, in the days of our youth, had—as young people always will have—certain pleasures and interests of our own, we always regarded these pleasures and interests, in spite of their intrinsic innocence, as stolen waters and forbidden fruits, and deprecated (and perhaps enjoyed) them accordingly.

Not that my father was in the remotest degree selfish ; he was one of the most unselfish men I ever met ; but it never occurred to him that the things which absorbed and satisfied him could fail to absorb and satisfy a younger generation. He desired above all things to make his children happy ; but happy in his way and not in their own. He would gladly go without anything he valued in order to give it to us ; yet he never understood that we should frequently prefer something which seemed utterly valueless to him. But, subject to these limitations, he was a most indulgent father. As my sister once laughingly said : “Father always let us have *his* own way, and gave us everything *he* wanted.”

All this was a source of the greatest amusement to *us*—and to him, too, when we pointed out to him how funny he was. It used always to be a great joke amongst us that when anything had disagreed with him, we were expected to take invalid diet ;

and when he was tired after a hard week in the House of Commons, we were begged to indulge in a quiet and restful week-end.

• But although we were only permitted such pleasures as would recommend themselves to a middle-aged statesman, ours was nevertheless a very merry home. We laughed at everything and everybody—especially at our father—and nobody enjoyed such laughter more than he did. I never knew anyone who so thoroughly appreciated a joke against himself as did he; he fairly revelled in it; and when his children were the perpetrators, his delight was unbounded. As my brother once said: “We have had many jokes, as well as most other things, at father’s expense.”

My father had a deep-rooted theory that a man must be a priest as well as a king in his own household; and whatever ministers of religion might be present, he always insisted at home on saying grace, and reading family prayers, himself. And he invariably did *read* them; I never knew him offer up an extempore petition. Although frequently indulging in theological discussions, he never “preached,” even to his own family. With regard to that life of the Spirit which few laymen show or share, and the strength of which none can gauge, and few can guess, all that we can say of it is that it was there. Of that, all who came into contact with my father, are perfectly sure. He was very reserved in religious matters, and in that he differed from many of his Church, but it was perfectly plain to all who knew him that he was essentially a religious man. A side light here and there might reveal some glimpses of it, but the man himself, as he lived, as he acted, as he thought and as he spoke, was the testimony of that faith in God and obedience to Him, which my father practised so much louder than he preached.

When Dr. Benson was Archbishop of Canterbury he wrote this letter to my father:

“Lambeth Palace,

“11 June, 1892.

“MY DEAR SIR,

• “Those who were present at the Standing Committee of the House of Commons tell me how much the discussion of the Discipline Bill owed to your firm and just opposition

to obstruction, and to your clear principle that the best, and not the worst, ought to be done with it, and for it.

"Of course I know that the sense of duty which actuated you is above all thanks, but I hope that you will not consider that I am taking an improper liberty if I warmly acknowledge its effectual working, and say how much I feel these acts of fairness, when we do not see all things in the same light.

"The spirit which you have shown is the spirit which I pray may be the ruling spirit in all our counsels and on all sides.

"Believe me to be, with great respect,

"Your very faithful servant,

"EDWARD CANTUAR."

"I feel," writes the present Archbishop of Canterbury to me, "that your father's life is one which may give a helpful stimulus to many men in many fields of work. I was myself brought into fairly close association with him in three at least of the offices which he held. I have a vivid recollection of his helpfulness in regard to questions about Poor Law chaplains, when he was at the Local Government Board. He took, as always, a large view of the problem and its difficulties, and I think it is to him that we owe certain definite improvements in the status of the chaplains and in the rules about their tenure of office. Again, I had of course to take counsel with him frequently when he was Secretary of State for India. No one could fail to be impressed by the penetrating view which he took of the responsibilities belonging to that great office, and I found him the wisest and best of counsellors. It happened also that, when he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I had repeatedly to discuss with him certain official questions, and, again, he left upon my mind a sense of thankfulness that we had, among our leading men, one who was able to bring to bear upon duties, great or small, the force wielded by a statesman who, among the complexities of political and official work, can preserve a quiet stability of Christian purpose. I mention these things because I think you may be glad yourself to have my little testimony. . . .

"I am yours very truly,

"RANDALL CANTUAR."

I have also the following letter from the Bishop of London :

“ London House,
“ St. James’s Square,
“ December 5th, 1911.

“ DEAR MRS. HAMILTON,

“ The impression that your father’s life left upon my mind is that he was one of the most broad-minded, large-hearted men I have ever met. He always seemed to me to be a true man of God, and one who could sympathize with all who tried to love and serve God, even if they showed their devotion in a way very different from his own. I cannot tell you how much I miss him as a personal friend, and as a power for good in the Diocese.

“ Yours very sincerely,
“ A. F. LONDON.”

And Dr. Talbot, the Bishop of Winchester, then Bishop of Southwark, also says of him :

“ I have a very distinct recollection of one conversation standing by a chimney-piece after dinner at the time of the Education controversy. He impressed me by the grave and serious way in which he looked at the matter, and made it plain that the real interest of religion was greater and deeper to him than any denominational advantage. I should have felt certain that, at any moment when mutual conciliation had been possible, he would have been one of those who would have striven hard for peace, and, alike by his personality and by the respect that all men bore him, would have been a mighty asset in its scale.”

This testimony, coming as it does, from four great dignitaries of the Church of England, whom my father knew in public rather than in his personal religious life, shows the reality of that atmosphere of religion in which he always lived whether in public or private. The life of the Spirit beat strong through all his active, and what men would call, his secular life. And it was no trick of

eloquence, no harmony of oratory, but the living power of a good man which weighted his words with that convincing force which all men felt who heard him speak.

In his early family life my father was somewhat awkward. With all children he was helpless, and with his own no less than others. He would metaphorically poke at and prod a child with his umbrella for some sign of intelligence, which it consequently never showed, but, in its childish way, unconsciously pitied him for not possessing. A little girl was once sent to see him as a celebrity; and afterwards, when her parents questioned her as to what he had said, she answered simply: "He only telled me one thing, and that was a thing I knewed before." Which seemed unfortunate, considering the respective sizes of his store of knowledge and hers; but my father never could gauge, nor adapt himself, to the mind of a child; he always credited it with more or less intelligence than it possessed.

With regard to his own children, of whom there were three—Ellen Thorneycroft, Edith Henrietta, and Henry Ernest—he was constantly plucking them up by the roots to see how they were growing; and then trying to stimulate them to grow more quickly. He was associated in their minds, from their remotest infancy, with intellectual effort. One of my earliest recollections is repeating pages of *The Fairchild Family* to him on a Sunday at tea-time; and the whole history of Mrs. Howard (as given in that priceless work) without a wrong word. But I do not remember his ever playing with us at any game, save the one great game of conversation, of which he never tired. He used to say: "Now talk to me, and amuse me." And we were trained to talk to him and amuse him all our lives. Even when we were quite little we were ordered to talk, as most other children are ordered to be quiet; which accounts, perhaps, for the fact that—had Coriolanus lived in our time—he would never have found his "gracious silence" in the Fowler family.

But while my father loved to be talked to, he hated to be bored; and—I must candidly confess—did not always succeed in concealing this fact.

Perhaps one of the most amusing of his domestic characteristics was his authority ; at least we, his loyal subjects, found it so. His language was ever more forceful than the feeling it expressed ; and he was constantly bringing to the front his verbal artillery to slay the most insignificant butterflies. Thus strangers were sometimes frightened of him ; but we, who knew him, never were. His orders in the home were always stern and peremptory ; but no one was more surprised than he was when they were obeyed ! One morning, not long before my sister's wedding, when presents came pouring in apace, he laid down the law most emphatically that no parcels were to be opened until after breakfast ; indeed the penalty was to be almost capital if they were. For some unknown reason, my sister, contrary to her custom, implicitly obeyed him, and sat down at once to her breakfast, leaving all her parcels unopened ; when shortly a pitiful appeal was heard from my father : " What ! am I not to be allowed to see any of your presents before I leave the table ? What have I done that everything should be kept secret from me ? " He always greatly enjoyed the after-telling of this story against himself.

As an instance of the disproportionate strength of his language, once—on detecting my sister in a slight exaggeration—he told her that she was " the most inaccurate woman the Almighty had ever made." She cheerfully replied that she was glad to be a masterpiece in any department of creation.

With servants he was just the same ; and I remember my mother's maid once saying to her about a new butler : " He is getting on much better, my lady ; you see, he is learning not to take any notice of what Sir Henry says."

On another occasion my father's indignation was aroused (and justly so) by coming into his library one night after dinner to find our old nurse (who had been with us from our babyhood), sitting in his favourite chair and reading his *Times*. After hearing him express himself with his usual volubility, upon the liberty she had taken, she said : " You are quite right, Sir Henry ; I ought to have come in earlier, and then I could have finished the papers without being disturbed."

We had an ancient gardener, also, of about thirty years'

standing, whom my father dismissed nearly every week. But the old man would follow him all over the garden, discussing matters of Church and State (he was an ardent Churchman and a strong Tory), and leaving his master's orders of dismissal to ~~take~~ care of themselves. Yet with all his servants this master was ~~very~~ popular.

My father's joy in his family never fully blossomed until they began to "do things"; and my sister's literary success was, I believe, dearer to his heart than any success of his own. His delight in *Concerning Isabel Carnaby* was twofold; not only did it bound into a full-blown success—running into a sale of a quarter of a million copies—but it was a fair and true picture of the old-world Methodism such as his soul loved; and many looked upon that picture who had never seen any correct illustrations of Methodism before. *Concerning Isabel Carnaby* united the two worlds that were dearest to my father's heart—the political circle and the Methodist circuit; and it was a Fowler who joined them together. The Fowler traditions, the Fowler humour, the Fowler way of looking at things, and of talking, and thinking, were all so familiar to him as to make the book almost a family hand-book; and his pride in it was as great as any mother's in her first-born son. When my sister, at the instigation of Sir William Robertson Nicoll (who has the reputation of knowing by instinct what people can do, and of setting them to do it), wrote this, her first novel, she read the MS. aloud to her family before delivering it into the publisher's hands: and my father's immediate enthusiasm over it knew no bounds. She was immensely surprised at this; partly because she did not think much of her literary effort herself, and partly because it was contrary to my father's custom to praise his children before their faces. In spite of his usual inclination to take a pessimistic view of any new venture, he predicted from that moment that *Isabel Carnaby* would be a great success; and the subsequent career of the book, though a surprise to its author, was none to its author's father. Her subsequent novels—and she wrote about one per annum for the next four or five years—were to him sources of consuming interest. He distracted her with the most detrimental advice,

he hindered her with most hampering help, he erased her best bits and suggested artistic impossibilities ; and then, when the book was at last in print and past reform, he took it to his heart, and ~~and~~ crowed over it, and crooned over it, as a mother over her babe.

My father was a singularly guileless man. It was amazing that he could have lived so long and yet learned so little about the seamy side of life. To believe in evil was the last thing he did—not, as is more usual, the first. Tales against people's reputations he never accepted ; and if belief was forced upon him against his will, then he put it away from him and did not refer to the subject again. Evil-speaking was never heard in his presence, since it neither interested nor amused him ; and though there was plenty of sharp-shooting, the shot was always too small to wound. One of his most frequently enforced rules was : " Talk about things and not about people " The following instance of his innocence was often quoted with a laugh at his expense.

One day my sister and I were spectators of a very thrilling scene in Kensington Gardens. A beautifully-dressed woman met a smart-looking man, and they were evidently in deep waters. The woman sat down in a chair and began to weep bitterly, while the man, with wild anguish, knelt at her feet and literally covered the hem of her dress with kisses. They were utterly oblivious to onlookers ; indeed, a small butcher's-boy stood close to them open-mouthed, and they took not the slightest notice of him. Once or twice the lady rose from her chair as if to walk away, and the man drew her back with passionate caresses. It was a most unusual occurrence. When we got home we recounted the incident to my father. " Dear me ! It must have been his wife," was his exquisite comment. And he had no idea that he was being funny.

It is worthy of note that my father read a certain novel, which had obtained widespread notoriety by its suggestiveness, from beginning to end without detecting one single innuendo. He thought it a very nice story, and recommended it cheerfully to several girls.

I do not know whether it was characteristic of their age or of themselves, but certainly it would be difficult to find a school-girl

nowadays who knew so little, as did both my parents, of the ways of the transgressors.

My father's home-life was ruled by routine. When at Woodthorne he breakfasted punctually at a quarter before nine; at ~~ten~~ ^{ten} o'clock he drove to Wolverhampton, come rain come shine, in an open carriage of his own invention. He was delighted with this carriage from the utilitarian point of view—the artistic he never reckoned with. It contained four large seats close to the ground, as he hated high steps up into a carriage. It had an enormously high box-seat, partly to remove the coachman out of hearing, and partly to enable the vehicle to be drawn by one of the seventeen-hands horses he always had. It possessed a huge hood, which far overlapped the two seats it was meant to cover, and a very straight high back, so that you could lean back without leaning back at all. It was certainly comfortable to sit in, but to look at—! He was fond of saying about ugly houses: "We do not live outside our houses, we live inside them." And he sat inside his carriage! Long after his active professional life had concluded, he retained his old rooms in Wolverhampton, and in them he spent the main part of the day. His luncheon consisted of two biscuits and a penny bun of a certain kind, which a clerk purchased for him. One day, so it was told me by his private secretary there, a new clerk bought a wrong make of bun which had sugar on, and there was no time to rectify the mistake. His bell for lunch rang, and consternation prevailed. No one dared confront him with a sugar-crust ed bun! In despair an intelligent understrapper produced the office duster, and dusted the bun of its unseemly covering. It passed muster, no comment was made, and the clerks breathed again! He always came home in time for tea, and from five o'clock to at least eleven, with a bare hour's interval for dinner, he read uninterruptedly. All the newspapers and reviews, many new books as they were published, and many old ones, too. Talking was not encouraged in the evenings, and yet he liked us all to sit and read with him. Fortunately we were such a book-loving family that this was not as great a hardship to the younger members as it might have been.

The entire absence of all interest in physical and outdoor life was a lack in our home, though I do not think he himself ever felt it to be so. He hated games and sport of all kinds, nor did he understand the healthy love of any physical exercise. He had no love of the country, and no appreciation of any but stereotyped beauty. His favourite environment was London, and his love of London was not entirely confined to Westminster, and Whitehall, though in a great measure. The power of association and of history was strong in him. He loved the City, and knew it from every possible standpoint, and the Temple, with its law-laden atmosphere, was specially attractive to him.

When he visited Scotland he did so with a hidden protest in his heart against shooting, fishing, deer-stalking and golf—all a deplorable waste of time, energy and money! Once when on our way to St. Andrews a young revivalist came up to our carriage at Kirkcudbright station with an offer of some tract entitled *The Gospel Message*.

"Certainly not," replied my father vehemently. "It is a subject in which I take no interest."

The young man looked amazed, but not so amazed as my sister and I did.

"Let me leave you a copy?" he pleaded.

"I would not look at it," my father persisted.

"Then you, madam?" And the young man, pale with sorrow, turned to my mother.

"No, thank you," she firmly replied.

The missionary finally offered a copy of the rejected tract to my sister, who fortunately accepted it, and the train moved on.

"What on earth did you mean by rejecting the *Gospel Message*?" we inquired with much curiosity.

"The what?" they almost shrieked. "We thought the young man said the *Golf Messenger*!"

How we laughed, and how terribly upset both our parents were at having (apparently) rejected revealed Truth! My mother took the tract from my sister and read every word of it; and afterwards wanted to put a notice in the "Agony Columns" of the Kirkcudbright local paper, explaining her error. This we

prevented her from doing ; but on our way home from St. Andrews, some weeks later, she literally hung out of the carriage window at Kirkcudbright station, in the hope that she might see that young missionary again. But she never did. After a time my father was able to see some humour in the incident ; but not my mother. To her it was always a dark and lurid memory.

My father's was a very absorbing personality, and he kept the minds of all those about him at concert-pitch. It was impossible, in his company, to unbend the mental bow or to stand at ease : there was a keenness and alertness about him which was infectious, even if at times a little exhausting. Unconsciously to himself his strong personality dominated the whole household, and coloured everything in it. He was not at all a strict father or master, and—as has been seen—he was not always obeyed in the letter. But he invariably was in the spirit. His unspoken word was law to children and servants alike, by right of sheer force of character. And this in small things quite as much as in great. After we were married and had homes of our own, it took us quite a long time to realize that open windows were compatible with righteousness ; or that it was possible to spend an evening at home otherwise than in reading, and yet be without reproach.

But though he might be a strain upon the intellect, he was not at all a strain upon the heart. He was one of those satisfactory people who, if they are not well to-day, are always better to-morrow. Now my mother was the exact opposite of this. She was a strain upon the heart-strings, but never upon anything else. She was never better to-morrow—she was always worse. When he caught a cold it never went down to his chest ; hers always did. After the heaviest week's work in London he came home with a fresh-blown colour as if he had been by the sea, and nothing had ever ailed him when away. Seeing that it was our household rule to dine early on a Sunday, he had a weekly attack of indigestion as a protest against suppers, though, as a matter of fact, it was always a hot dinner that was served at eight-thirty on Sunday evenings, but it was entitled supper, and was consequently more orthodox and less digestible. He had a great dread of medicines, and a lurking fear of poison in them all. He never

took a full dose of anything prescribed, in case some pernicious drug should be threatening him therein; and usually after the first dose he kept it on a table in his dressing-room until he felt better, which he invariably did without its aid. He was physically extremely nervous, but mentally not so at all, nor had he any power of dealing with those who were the latter. Once a member of his family was very nervous about the way her cold was developing—dreading chest complications. "I have rather a sharp pain when I breathe," she said anxiously, pleading for comfort which, of course, my mother provided; but before she had time to do so, he cheerfully remarked: "I expect it's just a touch of inflammation of the lungs."

The old Puritan strain was strong in his blood, and many of his characteristics were born of that. He had a great dread of boastfulness, and a lurking belief in the virtue of discomfort and self-depreciation. He did not know himself the least as he was, and when we psychically dished him up as it were, for his own benefit, he always enjoyed the recipe enormously, but protested that we were entirely wrong in all the ingredients. One of his theories was how much he would have liked to have kept cows and had a model dairy! A less bucolic man no one could imagine, and as he never drank milk, we often wondered what he thought when he arrived at that conclusion. He never owned to being an orator, but whether this was from Puritanical or from natural modesty, I am not sure. Still, the description he once gave of his method of speaking showed that he trusted to his powers of oratory. "I do not write my speeches," he said. "My plan is to saturate my mind with the facts and their verification. I trust that the words will come at the right moment." When asked for any suggestions for young speakers, he offered this characteristic advice: "Practise, practise, practise, and always be sure of your facts!"

He always reproved us for speaking of our ability to do anything. "Leave that for others to say," he would old-fashionedly declare.

My father's good qualities were all of a large make, and whatever he lacked was small and trifling. Consequently he was at his best among big claims, great demands, strenuous effort. He would face a crisis or catastrophe calmly, but an overturned coffee-cup

filled him with despair. He could cover an injury with sublime forgiveness, and a still more sublime forgetfulness, but he was impatient over little vexations. He could lead and manage men, but he would drive a schoolboy into defiance. He would sway a multitude, but he could not control a child. And even socially, in his dealings with people, he never responded except to what he unconsciously felt was a demand worthy of his supply. To people who did not interest him he was so indifferent, that they never realized the other Henry Fowler, which was his true and larger self.

My father had the greatest possible dread of haste or precipitancy. He had a belief in the old-fashioned prescription to "sleep over a thing," before making up his mind. He had no sympathy with hasty or impatient people. "Don't be in a hurry," he would say. And a favourite motto of his was : "When in doubt, do nothing." Another saying which I always associate with him is : "The troubles of to-day are the trifles of to-morrow."

At a public meeting in Wolverhampton, at the time of the Boer War, one of the speakers made some remarkable statements, which were directly contrary to my father's Imperialistic views. He was not at the meeting, but on the following morning Mr. C. N. Wright told him what had been said. "The man must be a fool," he replied. Mr. Wright explained that perhaps the speaker had not meant all he said, as he spoke exceedingly quickly and had not time to weigh his words. "Then he is a fool," was the caustic reply.

Mr. Wright, who was articled to the firm of Fowler and Langley, remembers how, when he had passed all his examinations, and had qualified as a solicitor, he was sent for by Mr. Fowler (as he was then), who told him that he was going to give him some advice. And he went on to say :

"In the first place, don't think you have learnt all there is to learn. You have done well in your examinations, and we may take it that now you are not behind other young men of the same age ; but take care that those who are behind you now are not in front of you when you are twenty-five or thirty. You must be learning all the time.

"Next, don't spend your leisure time in public billiard-rooms and hotel smoke-rooms. I know that a great many young men do, but it is no place for you. No one will think any better of you, because they see you there, and a great many will think worse, and will not give you their confidence. If you have nothing better to do, stay at home and read.

"Then don't be in a hurry to get married. Remember that what a young man in a profession has to offer a wife is generally not money, but position; wait till you know what position you can offer.

"And, last of all—and this is not on a par with the other points, but more what you may perhaps think a fad of my own—if you have not already begun to smoke, don't begin. I don't like to see a young man making himself into a chimney. It is a nasty habit and a very expensive one."

And yet we often regretted that my father himself did not indulge in the habit he so drastically and so characteristically condemned. In some ways it might have been a great advantage to him. It was a lack that he had no avenue of diversion through the senses—no power of physical enjoyment—for when his almost indefatigable brain was tired there was no other possible resource.

The following impression of him at home is written from such an entirely different standpoint from our own, that it is of interest in showing how he struck one who was a complete stranger to him as well as to his environment and country, though connected with him by ties of blood. His half-brother had many years ago settled in Canada, as a Wesleyan minister, and then he had married and brought up a son and daughter—neither of whom my father had ever seen. The daughter came on a visit to England and the Continent and stayed with us during the former. She sends me these recollections:

"My own personal impressions of my uncle may be valuable if for no other reason than that they view him from a Canadian's standpoint. You will no doubt remember that I first met him at luncheon in your London house. Your home-life was so different from any that could be

possibly lived in the Parsonage, that it somewhat overawed the little Canadian girl, and although your reception had been of cousinly cordiality, yet I awaited the coming of my uncle with much trepidation. His greeting was quiet, but kindness itself. His quiet demeanour, I soon realized, sprang from an innate heartsomeness that sought to put everyone at ease in his presence ; nevertheless I was conscious he was making a study of me, and knew the question : ' Is she, or is she not, a Fowler ? ' was uppermost, and the conclusion reached was favourable to the shy stranger. Later, when I visited Woodthorne, all my ideals of a typical English home were realized. My uncle's love of home and family was a warm light that was not hidden under a bushel, but shone out so as to be visible to every one bidden to partake of his hospitality ; his deference to his beloved wife's opinion came to the surface in many ways that he did not even suspect himself. My plans of journeying did not always stand approved by him. On one occasion my aunt said *entre nous* : ' Where do you want to go, May ? You know I will bring your uncle round to your plan.' And she did.

" His love for his family impressed everyone who crossed his threshold. I will never forget my uncle among his books. His library impressed me as being his *sanctum sanctorum*. His admiration for the achievements of Earth's Greatest was shown by his love of biography. He possessed the trait of all really great characters which is wont to be labelled unostentation—this impressed me to a marked degree, as also did another trait that stood out in striking contrast, namely, that he was absolutely sure of the righteousness of his convictions. He had evidently travelled so carefully over the ground that led to them that his conclusions remained unshaken.

" You, who were always accustomed to his conversation, may not have realized its brilliancy. For this reason the dinner-hours spent around his board linger with me.

" In Canada there exists a strong suspicion that many even extraordinary Englishmen do not understand the length, breadth and height of our marvellous country. The grasp

he had of Canadian affairs was a constant surprise to me. On my expressing a desire to visit the Lake region of England my uncle said: 'What are our lakes to your great water stretches?' He made most minute inquiries as to the nature and number of our cereals. His many questions on many subjects revealing his exact knowledge of our dominion.

"He wrote in March, 1906: 'Everyone who goes to Canada seems full of the greatness and prospects for the future of your country.'

"The position taken by him on the union of the Canadian Methodist and Presbyterian Church is directly opposite to that taken by the great men from across the Atlantic who were delegates to the Toronto Ecumenical Conference. They deplored that such an action was being contemplated, but he, with his wider vision of world economics as they touch the conservatism of men and means, to the furtherance of the petition 'Thy kingdom come!' wrote as early as 1909: "I am interested in the negotiations with the Presbyterians, and hope that they may be successful.' Although he led an absorbing life to the highest degree, that might have legitimately excused him from many details, he never forgot the welfare of the wife and children of his only brother across the seas whom, with one exception, he had never seen.

"My admiration for my beloved uncle was unbounded; his ability, kindness, courtly bearing, veneration for all that was noble and good, won for him a place in my affections which time and absence were not able to efface. His character stood out pre-eminently; and to the end of his life he never disappointed me."

The strength of my father's family affection showed itself perhaps more distinctly to the members of it who stood at a distance than to us who stood too near to discern details of a picture of which we ourselves formed a part. But it is quite true that he was possessed of a loyalty to, and love for his own people, which never waned. His reception of the girl from Canada was very different from that which he would have accorded an ordinary

visitor. The tie of blood was one which he never set on one side or outgrew. He had very few near relations living in my lifetime, but his devotion to his mother, and his grief at her death, stand out clear and defined in the review of his life. His love for his only sister and his unremitting care for, and kindness to her, could not be overlooked.

This letter was dated only three days before her death :

“ Woodthorne,

“ Wolverhampton,

“ September 22nd, 1893.

“ MY DEAR LOUISA,

“ We were thankful to hear from Lena this morning a slightly more encouraging account of you. I need hardly tell you how deeply we are interested in everything that involves your suffering, and that any alleviation or mitigation in this terrible affliction is a matter of the truest gratitude. I should have come to see you but the doctor assures me that the excitement of such a visit would be most injurious to you. I know that you are having all that the kindest affection can suggest or carry out for your comfort, and I feel sure that He Who has enabled you to bear this heavy burden for so many years with a fortitude and resignation beyond belief will not ‘ leave you ’ in this aggravation of your suffering. Lena is very good in sending us daily such full and clear accounts of your condition that we seem to know exactly how you are and what are the special difficulties with which you have to contend.

“ I came home on Wednesday—to-night they present my portrait to me, which is to be hung in the Town Hall. The cholera gives me some anxiety, but I take a hopeful view of the situation, but it requires very constant supervision. Ernest has returned home from Scotland stronger and better than he has been for some years. I send you what I know you feel that you fully possess—our united love and most hopeful and prayerful sympathy.

“ Your ever affectionate brother,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

This sister Louisa, the widow of the Rev. W. D. Tyack, had a long and trying rheumatic illness during which her step-children nursed her with true devotion. My father deeply appreciated all that they had done for her, which he was not able to do or provide, and after her death he wrote to the eldest of them :

“ Woodthorne,

“ September 28th, 1893.

“ MY DEAR LENA,

“ I must take this opportunity of expressing to you and to your sisters our deep and heartfelt appreciation of the unceasing kindness and devotion which you have during these long and suffering years so uniformly displayed.

“ No children, however dutiful and however affectionate, could have shown to any mother more self-sacrificing and ungrudging consideration, attention and sympathy than you have all done.

“ May God bless you for it. I shall not forget it and whenever I can promote your interest and happiness I will do the best in my power.

“ With our kindest love and sympathy,

“ I am, yours affectionately,

“ HENRY H. FOWLER.”

This is one of the few letters of his we have which expresses something more than the purely practical or the strictly conventional. Another was written to me on the birth of my younger son :

“ August 19th, 1908.

“ MY DEAREST EDITH,

“ I know your mother will have expressed to you how pleased and thankful we are that you have got through your trouble and that you and your little boy are going on satisfactorily. We are waiting for further particulars and especially for Gavin's remarks on all the circumstances by which he is now surrounded.

“ God bless you and your children is the constant prayer of your ever affectionate

“ FATHER.”

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Nothing but the exigencies of birth or death could extract the expression of his real feelings, but that they were strong and warm and deep no one could doubt.

The following impression is one from his sister's home, written by the eldest of her devoted step-children, who, after her death, were much with my parents in their later years :

“ I first knew Lord Wolverhampton, then Mr. Henry Fowler, after my father's marriage with his only sister, and as I look back my earliest impression is that I was afraid of him. He had a quick, sharp way of speaking, and of brushing aside a statement with which he did not agree, which was very alarming to an exceedingly shy girl fresh from school. Even then, however, I admired his character from afar, and though I scarcely dared open my lips in his presence, I always felt that my fear came from my own folly and ignorance as opposed to his wisdom and knowledge. I soon found that much kindness was hidden behind that stern exterior. His sister was very dear to him, and many presents came into our home : they were sent to her, but the Christmas hampers, and the gifts at other times, invariably included much that could only be intended to give pleasure to the children to whom she was so truly a mother, and in whom for her sake he took a friendly interest.

“ It was a great surprise to me when I found that he did not like to know that I was afraid of him, and gradually through long years of unfailing kindness I learned to know him so well, that love did indeed ‘ cast out fear,’ and my intercourse with him became very happy. In those years of growing friendship I discovered many things about him, and in every case the discovery was to his credit ; greater intimacy revealed nothing to lessen my trust and admiration, it only increased my appreciation of a truly great and good man, and deeper understanding explained away what at first may have looked like blemishes.

“ Nothing I think, is more true than that only those really knew him, who saw him constantly and intimately in his

home, and only those who knew him thus, can justly estimate his character. The rest only saw half the man, for of him it was emphatically true that he had 'two soul-sides,' and the one he 'faced the world with,' had not all the elements of that other one which his inner circle knew and loved.

"His own people were very much to him, even distant relations whom he had not seen for years were never forgotten ; and not even seeming neglect on their part sufficed to put them out of his life. He was always interested to hear about them, and was ever keenly alive to conversation about old friends and old times. My sisters and I won for ourselves a place in his regard which we greatly valued, but his first interest in us certainly arose out of our relationship to his sister, and was increased and established by our affection for her.

"He had a very fair mind, not only in public affairs, but also in private life, he liked every one to have what was due ; when we stayed in his house, really in order to be of use, he always recognized the fact that we were visitors, he was very unwilling that we should do too much, and always wished that some pleasure should be included. When I was with Lord and Lady Wolverhampton in London the Sundays were made very pleasant to me, for he usually took me to some particularly interesting or attractive service. To him the sermon was always important. He enjoyed good preaching, not mere eloquence, but real, sound teaching. 'I like to hear Dr. Campbell Morgan,' he once said to me, 'his sermons are so founded on the Bible.'

"He liked to walk about South Kensington with me, and to point out the buildings that had been erected, and the improvements planned by the Commission of the great Exhibition, of which he was a member. Again, when he drove in Hyde Park he was quick to notice and admire anything that had been done, and took almost as much pleasure in the trees and flower-beds as if they had been in his own garden. Almost, not quite, for it was Woodthorne he really loved, and when he was there he would walk among his roses with calm enjoyment, and look at every detail of the home he had

made with true joy of possession. He went to Wolverhampton for two days from London one summer and I can see his beaming face when he came back carrying two treasured roses, and saying, 'It was so lovely I wished I could stay there.' And the last summer, when he had no London house, he greatly enjoyed seeing his garden in all its summer beauty.

"He rarely asked for little attentions, but he liked them if they were given without fuss. To have his letters opened and handed to him, his small possessions which often went astray promptly found, his new books cut, the newspapers laid ready to his hand, and the inevitable bag into which letters and papers were put for conveyance to the office, placed conveniently near—all these things were grateful to him in his later years.

"In the same way, though he seldom asked for companionship, he liked to have it, and was not fond of going about alone. I remember one Sunday morning in Queen's Gate, when we were arranging at breakfast to what churches we should go, Nellie and her husband were going to the Savoy Chapel and invited me to go with them, but before I replied I turned to Lord Wolverhampton and asked what he was going to do. 'It is too hot to go far,' he answered; 'I shall go to the church that is nearest.' It is one of my happiest memories to recall his smile when I said, 'Then I will go with you.'

"It was a grave, strong, rather stern face in repose, but the smile was radiant, like nothing so much as sunshine on a grey rock. It often came, that smile, when he looked at his children, or when any one spoke in praise of them.

"I spent a month with him just before the end, after the great sorrow had clouded his life and when his health was very feeble. He was then, as he had been always, very kind to me, and very anxious that I should not do too much. 'You have been writing nearly all day,' he said once, when I had spent an hour or so over some business of my own. 'You will wear yourself out. I want you to rest.' The days were

long and weary, for he could no longer work and he had never known how to play, but talk about the past would always interest him.

“ To my sister and to me it is a source of lasting pleasure to know that we were allowed to be so often with Lord and Lady Wolverhampton in those last years when the marriage of their daughters had left them alone. I have written my impressions of him, and it only remains to say that she was an ideal wife, and one of the kindest women friends we ever had.

“ LENA TYACK.”

CHAPTER XXIX

OF ELLEN, HIS WIFE

"Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love."

TENNYSON.

"Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."—*Proverbs of Solomon*.

"Truly comfort beyond comfort is stored up in a mother
Who bears with all, and hopes through all, and loves us all."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

HENRY FOWLER'S biography would be utterly incomplete without some definite reference to the great influence and inspiration which he found in his marriage, and some sketch, slight though it must be, of that good and gracious woman whom it was his happiness to call his wife.

Once a very intimate friend of ours was explaining to her little girl that everybody does wrong sometimes. "Except Lady Fowler," corrected the child; and truth is found in the mouths of babes and sucklings. My mother was not only a very good woman, but she was a very wise one, and her judgments were a great lever to all her husband's public and private actions. Very few people outside his own immediate home circle realized how great was her influence over him, and how strong. Everything he did he talked over first with her, and he never, to my knowledge, acted contrary to her counsel. When anything was suggested of which he disapproved, he always, to quote her words, "struck his top-note first"; but if only we had enlisted her sympathies on the other side, and when that was her children's it was not a



VISCOUNTESS WOLVERHAMPTON, C.I.

difficult task, she would always bring him to see the matter in another light and finally to consent. "Leave it to me"—so she would assure our anxious hearts, and no combination of governments, no powers of earth, we almost felt no intervention from heaven, could have been so potent in our service as that simple sentence. It was always my father's nature to seem much sterner and more unyielding than he really was, and those who never penetrated below that somewhat alarming surface did not know how willing he was to listen to reason, and how surely he proved the largeness of his mind by the fact that he was incapable of obstinacy. And she who was always not only below the surface, but in the very depths of his heart and mind, smiled at the forbidding exterior and knew her power in the realm beyond it.

"When consulted about a matter of difficulty requiring judgment, Sir Henry would frequently ask that it might be mentioned to him again on the following morning, and it often happened that in the interval he had discussed the matter with his wife, in whose judgment he placed implicit confidence. 'It must be so,' he would say, 'indeed it is so, Lady Fowler says so.'" And Mr. C. N. Wright, who is now a partner in his old firm, further adds: "He said to me one day: 'I have come to the conclusion that your view of the matter is a correct one. When you first mentioned it I did not say anything, but, as a matter of fact, I did not agree with you. I talked it over more than once with Lady Fowler, and I found to my surprise that from the very beginning she took your view of it. You have not convinced me, but she has.'" And another friend says: "His wonderful dependence upon Lady Fowler's judgment and opinion was at first a great source of surprise to me—but by and by we got to know that if in ordinary conversation, or in a meeting, he once said: 'Lady Fowler thinks so and so,' that was final—and he expected it to be final with others also."

The enormous influence which my mother had she was wise enough not to squander. She never made "a government question" of a matter which was essentially unimportant, nor brought out her reserve forces to secure a worthless victory. She possessed a wonderfully accurate sense of proportion; and she never wanted

her own way because it *was* her own way (in fact, she was so abnormally unselfish that this would have been an argument against it to her mind); but only when she was convinced that it was the right way. And she was so wise, as well as so sensible, that her way and the right way generally were the same. She never disputed, or wanted to dispute, the fact that a man's proper place in his household is at the head of it, and she made all other interests therein subservient to his. She understood him so perfectly that she knew what he would want to do far better than he knew himself; but though she legislated for what she knew would be the fact, she never mentioned a possible discrepancy, but threw herself into the theorizing with her ready and unfailing sympathy. And here we come to the corner-stone of her whole character and personality—her enormous power of sympathy, in which all her thoughts and feelings were steeped and soaked. It was, indeed, almost too strong for her own happiness. Other people's feelings she not only understood, but shared to the utmost limit. "To rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with those that weep," was the simple practice of her daily life; she could not do otherwise, and she often literally cared more than did the people themselves. "It is human nature to weep with them that weep," she used to say, "but it requires grace to rejoice with them that rejoice." But nature and grace were so welded in her, that those who had the privilege of knowing her best could not define between the two. Her nature seemed all grace to us. Her consideration for others almost amounted to a disease. If the footman coughed, nothing would induce her to take him out on the carriage until she was convinced of his convalescence; it never struck her that he was probably lounging at the head of the area steps in his shirt-sleeves instead! She had a dear little habit whenever she gave an order to a servant of instantly adding a reason for it, so that there should appear nothing arbitrary in her requests. "Will you please post this letter—it is of great importance that Sir Henry should have it to-morrow." As if it was exceptional that a letter need be posted, and some special urgency that required it to reach its recipient on the following day.

To show how the intensity of her feeling for others was an inherent characteristic the following illustration is worthy of notice. As a little girl, she had a wonderfully bright colour; when she was in her early teens her father had a bad accident, and when he was brought home his little daughter was so physically, as well as mentally, distressed that her colour vanished that day and never came back. There is an artistic sympathy with one's fellow-creatures which is temperamental and an understanding which is purely the product of a dramatic intellect, but such were not hers. She was neither artistic nor dramatic; she could not enjoy pathos, nor appreciate the charm of feeling unhappy when you know that you are not. Her sympathy was not born in sentiment but in sharing, and so her feelings were practical and real, springing straight up from her heart and rushing out warm and living and true.

So Henry Fowler never faced the world chilled by a lack of sympathy at home, and that means a great deal to any man. I never remember an occasion when he had been away from home that she was not waiting to welcome him on his return. She would sit listening for the horses' footsteps, and rush to ring the bell, so that he should not be kept a moment outside his own front door, and there was always her smile to greet him. "If there is anything unpleasant to be told always wait until a man has had his dinner before you tell it," was one of her maxims; another was: "When your husband has been out, never meet him with a reproach, however much he may deserve it." And yet another, when confronted by any trouble or anxiety: "Live a day at a time." Even when he had only been out for the day she would not, if possible, be absent on his return, and it was a sort of family ritual that we should all be assembled to meet him and to make his home-coming pleasant.

She had the greatest possible objection to the atmosphere of perpetual argument or bickering of any kind; and she would emphasize the futility of a war of words by a saying, which many associate with her unfailing wisdom: "You cannot have your say and your way."

My mother was intensely interested in political life. That fire

in my father's breast never required stoking, but, nevertheless, she fed it constantly with the fuel of her untiring appreciation and approval. His views were hers—not, as is often the case with married couples, because they were his—but because her mind was moulded in much the same shape ; and in big questions, outside the inherent differences of sex, even in intellects, she had arrived at similar conclusions. They had one vast meeting-ground in the field of common sense, one trysting-place in unfailing good judgment. His ambition for a life of great public service was hers for him, and she never drew his energies away from that goal for the gratification of any personal whim.

As regards public work for herself, she was not a moving spirit. In fact, I think the only public work in which she took an active part was that of Foreign Missions, in which she always showed an intense and vital interest. Her vocation was her home-life and all its radiating branches, but she took little part in women's work, as the term is understood in these days. Wifehood, as she exemplified it, was a profession in itself, and anything which it did not absorb was consumed in motherhood. Her last years were lit up by the light of grandmotherhood, and her love for her two little grandsons was, we sometimes thought, the most radiant passion of her whole life, and her last words on this earth were : "How I do love those children !" She had a strong sense of kinship towards all her relations, and the fact that her lot was cast near the home of her childhood, and in the midst of her large family circle, was a constant source of happiness to her. She loved to dwell among her own people. She shrank from publicity and had an absurdly humble idea of her own powers, though as years went on she would sometimes say : "I like to grow old—it makes one so much wiser."

She had a keen sense of humour but not a strong flow of animal spirits, and was easily worried and made anxious. "Ellen will never have much trouble," her husband's sister said, "for she could never bear it. I unfortunately can, and I regret to say it does me good." And certainly there was a striking difference in the weight of sorrow which my aunt was called to bear and that which fell to my mother's lot. Another attribute which my parents had

in common was that of caution; and though such attributes may have their bad as well as their good sides, it is a great saving of domestic friction when both err, or excel, in a similar direction. I have known endless irritation caused when one of a couple is cautious and the other reckless, or when one is timid and the other daring. But in our home all such irritation was non-existent. Their tastes were also strikingly alike especially in their ideas of enjoyment. They both loved a London season, as they took it; and dinner-parties were their greatest diversion. To dine at a restaurant, to go out to supper after a theatre, to go up the river, or to take a week-end out of town, were all anathema; but the ordinary, typical, London dinner-party, with a table stretching beyond its legitimate boundaries away into the morning-room, and an assembly of what they called "interesting people" (though not of the Bohemian type), or else a dinner at the House of Commons—provided they were not expected to go on the Terrace—and a debate afterwards, were true delights to them. They both keenly enjoyed good conversation and took a prominent part in it, and their estimates of their neighbours at a dinner-party were significant of their own personalities. For instance, my father would often say what a remarkably clever woman he had taken into dinner, while my mother would see in So-and-So such an astonishingly kind heart and amount of sympathy which she had not expected in him, and no one else had probably ever discovered! People are usually what we make them, and reflect us back our own characteristics. That wonderful truth that the measure we mete shall be meted to us again, is so worked out in everyday life, social as well as religious. And not only do we receive our quantity in like measure, but our quality also. My mother's sympathetic nature would strike a stream of sympathy out of the hardest rock, but she would never dream that her touch had wrought the miracle. She always took a motherly care of the man who took her down to dinner in seeing that he had proper food for his sustenance. She knew so well how my father, when he was interested in the conversation, would let course after course go by and usually had to be fed with concentrated meat-juice, or

something equally nourishing, on his return from a dinner-party. I remember her telling us how a very distinguished man, whom she sat next, would have had no dinner at all except a little asparagus, if she had not interfered, and reminded him that he must be fed. One of her favourite recollections was of Sir William Harcourt, whom she would always extol as the kindest and most tender-hearted of men. If her opinion should happen to be queried, she told how he had confided in her at a dinner-party, that when his eldest son first went to Eton, he went down himself from London, putting aside all other engagements, every night for the first week, to bid the boy good-night for fear he should be feeling home-sick. What better could have fired a mother's heart? and how few fathers would have been guilty of such a divine absurdity!

On another occasion, when she was asking the late Lord Kimberley—then Foreign Secretary—about his Ambassador's life in St. Petersburg, he was moved to tell her how, in spite of all the interesting associations of that time, a shadow lay upon his recollections of it, for, he said, "we lost a baby child there, and a day never goes by without my seeing again that little dead face." Surely it was the mother heart which drew forth from such unlikely men these tender confidences.

My parents were both possessed by a perfect horror of draughts, or, indeed, fresh air until it had been bottled up for some hours—and to feel cold was a form of torture from which they fled. They liked to live in an atmosphere of at least seventy degrees indoors, and the sight of an open window was an abomination unto them. Had only one of them been made this way, what a trial for the other!—but they were absolutely one in these peculiarities, so there seemed no peculiarity as far as either was concerned. They both loved listening to a good sermon, and their Sundays in London were most varied as regards denomination and creed, but they always ferreted out a good preacher. And even when they grew older, and did not care to go out on Sunday evenings, I can picture them with the electrophone pressed to their ears, enjoying the discourses of Dr. Parker at the City Temple, or Dawson at the High-

bury Quarrant Chapel, or Hugh Price Hughes at St. James's Hall. They usually attended St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, on Sunday mornings, and took their nonconformity later in the day. I remember a London clergyman telling me what a joy it was to see my mother in his congregation, sitting all athirst for his words, and drinking them in as fraught with eternal significance. And such they always were to her—for those that seek find. They neither took much exercise beyond the daily constitutional, which was an article of their belief—and they were both fond of comfort, but indifferent to luxury. They were even physically alike, and we have often been asked if there was any blood relation between them to account for it; and as old age drew on the likeness increased; they had excellent health, and took care of it; they were born in the same year, and they died in the same year, after having lived in unbroken harmony for over half a century.

Though so gentle and loving in her ways, my mother had a great spirit, and whatever the occasion might be she was always equal to it. She was humble but not nervous: she was simple and natural, but perfectly self-possessed. She was incapable of pretence or snobbishness or any such vulgarity, and the word "gentlewoman," in its highest as well as lowest meaning, applied to her most absolutely. She had an almost morbid horror of saying anything which could hurt anyone's feelings, and only twice in her life was known to make a sharp retort; and we were never tired of telling of those two memorable occasions. On the first, just after she had been honoured by the Queen conferring on her the Imperial Order of the Crown of India, a noted Member of Parliament, whose previous history had somewhat interfered with his promotion, said to her rather rudely: "And what have you done, I should like to know, to be made a C. I.?"

"Behaved myself," she smilingly replied; "and if you had done the same you might have had something, too."

On the other, she was being taken down to dinner by a very grumpy old professor one broiling night in July, and she opened her conversation by asking him if he did not find the great heat very trying. He remained absolutely silent until they took their seats, and then he said: "I make it a rule never to answer foolish

questions." "You are quite right," was her quick retort, "it was a foolish question, because it doesn't matter in the least to me whether you are tried by the heat or not."

As a rule, however, her conversational powers were not of the repartee order; they were full of wisdom if not of wit, and they were steeped in a comprehensive knowledge of all the affairs of the day, and as the power of sympathy is the main attribute of a good talker, and a good listener, she could not fail to be both. She was, moreover, a very shrewd woman, and one of marvellously quick perceptions. Not only had she the wisdom to deal with a state of affairs; she arrived at the true knowledge of a state of affairs before anyone else did. Now my father was not a man of quick perceptions; he rarely saw anything that was not there to be seen; and herein his wife was indeed a help-meet for him by supplying a quality that he lacked.

Again, she was less hampered by prejudices than anybody I ever met, whilst he—though extremely just in large matters—was apt to be influenced by prejudices in smaller ones. This was characteristic of the Fowlers, for his sister Louisa once laughingly said: "There is nothing I enjoy more than a good, unfounded prejudice." But my mother—though tender towards everybody's faults and failings—could judge a foe by exactly the same standard as a friend; and her opinion of an action was never regulated by the personality of the perpetrator. She loved the sinner no less because of her hatred of his sins: but, on the other hand, she hated the sins no less because of her love for the sinner. Women are popularly supposed to have no sense of justice; but my mother was always absolutely just, even though her justice was invariably tempered by mercy. But it was never adulterated by prejudice.

Every personality has so many sides, and no one person perhaps ever sees them all, so that it is difficult to give a true sketch in but a few lines, and to make those lines in drawing with the idea and the ideal, which, as I look back upon my mother, I see were one; but there is one tender touch without which no record of her could be written by any who ever really knew her—I mean, her divine gift of comforting. It was not only that her sympathy drew sorrow and suffering to her, but they never were turned

empty away—she could always give comfort, she could always dry tears, and mellow misery, and soothe pain. As little children in all our abandonment of grief over things that were of no importance, we never found that she thought it did not matter, but brought it to her with the knowledge that all would be made right again—and as children of a larger growth, we rushed to her for comfort in every trouble and perplexity and pain, and never failed to find it. And when illness and old age at last together drew her out of the domestic circle, and weakened all her powers, the biggest blank was that of the comforter ; but as a bright mirror, in which we see reflected the Face of God, was the lesson she left us : “ As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you.”

CHAPTER XXX

HOLIDAY MAKING

"Holidays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys."—CHARLES LAMB.

ONCE every year, but fortunately only once, the question of my father's holiday had to be discussed and decided upon. It was a peculiarity of his that although it was apparent from the first what his decision would be, that fact in no wise lessened the discussion and laborious weighing of *pros* and *cons*, which were always necessary in his scheme of life. To have once pursued a certain course of action in such minor matters of domestic detail was to establish a precedent which possessed unlimited wear. I never knew such a home as ours for precedents. But of this he seemed quite unconscious, and felt a freshness in his conclusions, which they were really far from possessing. In looking back I see the regularity of a chess-board in our daily life; and not only of actions, but of thoughts and feelings. For instance, he was a man who always spent his Sundays at home—the week-end visit was an abomination to him, and he never dined out anywhere on Sunday evenings. But at five o'clock, when we sat down to Sunday tea, in a more solemn and fixed manner than on a week-day, a great gloom always fell upon my father's mind—generally in connection with the future of the Liberal party. Pessimism swelled almost to despair, and this state lasted till six o'clock, when he retired into his library to read the evening service, two or three sermons, a hymn from the Methodist hymn-book, and a sort of dessert of what we used to call Sunday magazines. It is noticeable that though he had such a

love for the English Prayer-book he had a great dislike to *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*, and would not even possess a copy of the latter. All good sermons he loved. Liddon's were special favourites, also Westcott's, but, of living preachers, he liked Campbell Morgan's, I think, the best. His library was lined with books of sermons and theology, and we were always brought up to recognize a marked line of distinction between Sunday and week-day literature. At a quarter-past eight—almost to the moment—he would lay down his books, and hold out his hand, which my mother promptly took, and they sat hand-in-hand for a quarter of an hour until supper was announced, as it was part of our evangelical training to dine early on Sundays. Beyond this they rarely showed any demonstration one towards the other.

As the London season drew towards its close the question of the holiday became open to observation. The first axiom laid down by my father was, that, after his year of hard work, he felt he must have a month's complete holiday, though we all knew perfectly well that he would return home three weeks to the day. The next thing was to decide upon a place, which must be bracing and exactly the temperature and conditions of the East Coast—consequently it was impossible to find it anywhere but on the East Coast; and as Cromer, North Berwick, and St. Andrews were the only places he knew well on that coast, it had to be one of those. In earlier years he used to go to Switzerland with my mother each August, but of those visits we have no recollections or records, though I am perfectly certain that a diary of one would have been the history of all.

Holiday-making to my father was a ponderous manufacture. That his scheme of enjoyment did not of necessity embrace his children's never for one moment struck him. He did not understand that all young people had not the tastes of middle-aged statesmen, and therefore he made no provision for any holiday other than his own, or for any diversity of occupation even within the stereotyped holiday. In looking back through the golden pages of memory one is apt to linger longingly on those far-off holidays when we were all together, and to see them as other than they were. But in reality they were as heavy as lead on

our youthful souls, and from them there was no escape. "We don't mind going to increase father's enjoyment, and to amuse and divert him as much as we can, but we do wish he wouldn't think it was all our treat and that he was going for us." So we would confide in our mother; and she, being older and wiser, would remind us that his way of enjoyment was to imagine he was doing it for someone else; and so not to accept and appreciate that spirit—noble and unselfish in principle, though a little trying in practice—would rob him of the enjoyment and recreation which he so much needed.

We seemed always to start at eleven o'clock on those annual holidays, and an enormous hired omnibus took the maid and the luggage, of which latter we travelled with an exorbitant quantity; while we went in the carriage, and called at his office on the way to the station for a still further instalment of despatch-boxes and black bags. At the station, where we arrived about thirty-five minutes before the train started, a flock of porters surrounded the piled-up trucks, for the silver tips which were never lacking, and we always had an engaged carriage. When at length the send-off was accomplished, over a dozen daily papers bought, and the sandwich-bag laid in the rack—nothing else was ever allowed in the rack, however light in weight—my father would put on his travelling cap, lean back with a smile in his usual left-hand seat, with his back to the engine, and remark: "Well, I think I have managed that very nicely for you!" To which we all enthusiastically and gratefully responded. And then, but not till then, our holiday began. I often wondered, I wonder still, why a luncheon-basket was never allowed, or a cup of tea, *en route*. Except that my parents belonged to the age when lunches on a journey consisted of sandwiches and a sponge-cake to follow; and a fowl in profile, or tea and bread and butter, were against the traditions of the age, and therefore impossible to them. My sister said that the glorious independence of the married state was first revealed to her by a tea-basket on her honeymoon; but it was so contrary to the family traditions that she felt afterwards as if she had been eating meat offered to idols, and her conscience slightly pricked.

I remember a very successful holiday at Cromer in the year 1892. We always stayed at an hotel and took our meals in a private room, which we youngsters considered decidedly dull, and also the room was apt to be rather confined quarters, with every table and most chairs covered with bags and despatch-boxes, and such literature as my father had provided for his holidays—which consisted of all the guide-books to the places and district which were published, and one of Scott's novels. As we usually went every year for about a decade to the same place, and fresh guide-books were still bought, and carefully taken home for preservation, there was a somewhat unwieldy collection of them in the Woodthorne cupboards.

Cromer has always been our favourite holiday place. For one thing we knew so many people in the neighbourhood who kept my father amused and interested, and so we were relieved of that responsibility, while we ourselves could participate in the social life, a blessed relief from the stodgy hotel routine, which at some places, such as North Berwick, was our sole resource. In 1892 Mr. Morley, as he then was, had a house in the village of Overstrand; and he and my father had many long and pregnant talks of political matters as they strolled on the links together—utterly unconscious of the agonized cries of "Fore" with which the golfers pursued them; though one of them owned afterwards, I forget which, to believing that the shout was "Four," a method of scoring in that incomprehensible game. Happily, however, they survived all risks, and Mr. Schnadhorst, who was also staying in Cromer, sometimes joined the political conclave. Its purport is hinted at by the question of a little boy—Mr. Godfrey Locker-Lampson, M.P. for Salisbury, in these days—who, having caught with interest the words which fell from the lips of these well-known politicians, asked his father in an old-world, Fairchildish fashion: "Pray, papa, what is a caucus?" I believe he thought it was an animal of the turtle tribe. It was during this visit to Cromer that there occurred the only solitary occasion when my father took part in an out-of-door game. He and Mr. Justice Denman had strolled up to Newhaven Court where a great birthday tea-party for the twins (Mr. Oliver Locker-Lampson, M.P. for Huntingdonshire and

Mrs. Conway Fisher-Rowe) was in full swing, and Mrs. Locker-Lampson suggested that we should all play at trap, bat and ball. It required great firmness on her part, and an unusual docility on theirs, to include the statesman and the judge, but she triumphed, and they obediently played for half an hour with such incapacity and clumsiness as could only be found in men of their distinction.

Another holiday that stands out in my recollection was at North Berwick in 1893, when the hotel caught fire on the night we arrived. My father was the first to discover the smoke which was rolling in clouds from the east wing, and he straightway went downstairs and sounded the gong. Under the impression that some rowdy young man was disturbing the whole hotel on his way to bed, officials appeared to see the solemn apparition of a statesman in his dressing-gown, from which nothing further than a rowdy youth could be imagined. Lord Goschen was also staying in the hotel, and he suddenly appeared fully dressed in a frock-coat, with a bunch of papers in his hand. He was to speak in Edinburgh, I believe, on the following day, and we imagined that he was resolved through perils of fire or perils of water (and the latter became serious when a local hose was in manipulation), to preserve his necessary costume and the notes of his speech. Everyone rushed out more or less attired, and it is a fact that an old lady appeared in the corridors that midnight who was never seen again. There were plenty of young ones to be found next day—even some middle-aged. But the old lady was not. My sister afterwards wrote a very popular short story founded upon this incident.

Occasionally the annual holiday was terminated by a visit to friends, and for many years my father never failed to spend a few days with Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in later times at Skibo Castle, his beautiful Highland home. During one of these visits we had a great adventure, which we called a shipwreck, and this was probably the only real adventure which my unadventurous parents ever experienced. We were out for a day's yachting in the North Sea, and when we were a long way from the mouth of the Firth, something went wrong with the engines. We dare not lie to for fear of drifting on to the rocks with the strong tide, and we all

ran up signals of distress, chiefly composed of towels and broomsticks ; to which in time a trawler responded, and with some difficulty our party, consisting of Mr. Carnegie, Sir Walter and Lady Foster (now Lord and Lady Ilkeston) and their daughter, my father and mother and self, a Scotch minister and Mr. Carnegie's private secretary, jumped from the yacht on to the trawler. The Scotch minister was invaluable throughout. Not only did his strong arms preserve both my parents in turn from a watery grave, but he was able to converse with the fishermen in Gaelic, and ascertain that they would land us at Cromarty that evening. " If the wind held," seemed to have been implied, but not mentioned. It dropped about four o'clock after three hours' tacking, and we felt rather anxious. We all sat round a hole on deck, which contained we did not inquire what, but into which our feet dangled. The sailors roughly tucked us up with sails or tarpaulin to keep off the splash of the waves. Fortunately we were all good sailors, but it was not a situation wherein a statesman was at his best. A very dirty hold was subsequently discovered, in which were a woman and two ragged children ; but our physician, Sir Walter Foster, laid down the law peremptorily that, let it blow or rain or splash all night, none of us were to seek shelter there. They had been fishing for a month or so in the North Sea, so one night more or less meant nothing to the sailors ; it meant a good deal to us. At last, late at night, they succeeded in making the harbour at Cromarty, and the fisherfolk who crowded the pier evinced a most natural astonishment at perceiving the cargo on board. The problem of paying the men arose, and no one had any money except the secretary ! To find adequate accommodation for the night was impossible, but an ample, though very rough supper was soon forthcoming. We reached Skibo again at two p.m. on the following day.

I think the above recollections cover all that was not conventional in my father's holidays, but there are still many purple patches which he remembered with an afterglow of enjoyment all his life. For instance, little visits at Dalmeny, where he would revel in long talks with his distinguished host ; visits, too, to Newhaven Court, Cromer, where he was always specially happy and at home.

He often spoke of a particularly interesting day which he and Mr. Locker spent with the Rev. Whitwell Elwin, Rector of Booton, Norfolk, who succeeded Lockhart (Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law) as editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and who had been in touch with all the men of letters and politicians of his day. As he lived to be eighty, he had known all the history-makers of two generations, and my father greatly enjoyed meeting him.

After the death of that most fascinating of men, Frederick Locker, the old brilliant circle still gathered in his house, and my father always felt it a privilege as well as a pleasure, to be included among Mrs. Locker-Lampson's guests. He met there from time to time Mr. and Mrs. William Lowther, the Speaker and Mrs. Gully, Sir Edward Hamlyn, the Dean of Salisbury and Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Jessop, and many others too numerous to mention; and nowhere was he happier to stay, and nowhere was my father more truly appreciated, than in the house of that friend whom he valued to the very end of his life. Indeed, it was at Newhaven Court that both he and my mother went out to tea for the last time, during their summer at Overstrand in 1910.

Mrs. Locker-Lampson reminds me of an occasion, during one of his visits, when a number of young people came to luncheon and to play lawn tennis afterwards. My father went with the young men into the smoking-room directly lunch was over. The afternoon drew on and still the lawn was deserted, and there was no sign of the white-flannelled figures. At last the library door opened and slowly and reluctantly the young athletes passed out on to the sunny lawn—with that sigh of disappointment which children heave on the completion of a fascinating tale. Sir Henry Fowler had been talking, they said, and they could not tear themselves away.

Now my father was an old-fashioned religious man, and there are not too many homes left where old-fashioned religious customs prevail; where family prayers are held, where Sunday is a day set apart, and where the very atmosphere breathes of the faith which our fathers fought for and held. But such a home is Mrs. Locker-Lampson's, and my parents visited there with the readiness and content with which we are always drawn to a truly congenial home.

Of all my father's holidays, however, those stand out in fullest interest which he spent as Minister in Attendance on the Queen at Balmoral. The fact of a holiday for a holiday's sake was always somewhat of a burden to him ; but a holiday, which came dressed up in the guise of a duty, was a sheer delight, and such were his holidays at Balmoral.

The first was in September, 1894, when he was Minister in Attendance on the Queen for the first time. We have a sketch of his enjoyment in the letters he wrote to my mother from there :

“ Balmoral Castle,

“ September 25th, 1894.

“ MY DEAREST LOVE,

“ Here I am in this lovely place on an exquisite morning, and although there is a heavy bag of work, I write to you first, and as fully as I can, reserving fuller details until I see you.

“ I left Mrs. Wallace (who was kindness and hospitality to the uttermost) yesterday morning—I had a very long (as the engine broke down) but pleasant journey to Aberdeen—reached Ballater at 4.50—beautiful drive along the road you will remember, and reached here about 6.30. As you have seen from the papers, there was a theatrical performance, and the castle was full to overflowing. The Queen's dinner was at eight—and I was asked. The party—Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg, Duchess of Albany, Prince Victor (son of Princess Christian), Princess Henry of Prussia, Count something (a German), Duchess of Atholl, Sir F. Edwards and myself. I sat between Princess Beatrice and Princess Henry, to whom the Princess Beatrice at once presented me, and we had a very pleasant dinner. I was only three from the Queen, and could therefore answer her when she joined in the conversation. Princess Henry is charming—very like her sister, the fiancée of the Czarevitch, and I had a great deal of talk with her. She was interested in many national things and talked very well ; after dinner we followed the Queen to the drawing-room, and there the

Duchess of Albany told the Prince Christian Victor¹ to present me to her, and we had a very long talk. She is² a charming woman, and did not, as Nellie can understand, fall in my estimation by telling me that she was reading certain of Sir Walter Scott's novels to her children. After a while she went off to the ball-room, where the theatricals were, and the Queen and Royalties immediately followed. They gave me a first-rate place, and we had two very clever performances by the Beerbohm Tree Company, which lasted until nearly twelve. Then back to the drawing-room, where the invited guests (about fifty, I should think) passed before the Queen, and the actors and actresses were presented—the Queen then withdrew and we went to supper. I had to take the Princess Beatrice in to supper. After supper, which was not over till late, I was glad to go to bed. This morning I have breakfasted with the Household—and had a short walk in these beautiful grounds, and am now writing in the 'Minister's room'—it is a room about the size of our library with the octagon for a dressing-room.

"I enjoyed my visit to Glassinghall. Everything was done to promote my comfort. I am glad to hear from Ernest, and that he is so much better and stronger for his Scotch visit. Sir F. Edwards asked me at dinner if I had seen the *Review of Reviews*; he expressed himself as greatly interested in it; so nothing is secret in the lives and doings of public men. Love to all.

"Ever yours,

"H. H. F."

"Balmoral Castle,

"September 26th, 1894.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

"I am very comfortable and enjoying myself. I left off my account with Monday night. Yesterday morning I breakfasted with the Household—*i.e.*, the Duchess of Atholl, the Maid of Honour, the lady in attendance on the Princess Henry, Sir Henry Ponsonby, Sir Flectwood Edwards, and

Colonel Byng and the Doctor. I sat next the Duchess and had a good deal of talk with her, both at breakfast and at lunch. After breakfast, and work, and getting off bags, I went out for a walk. Lovely day, and that fragrant smell of heather, pines and limes perfuming the air which you will remember, and the Dee as clear as crystal. Very hot. The new Church is a gem. After lunch the Bishop of Rochester* called on me, and then I went a drive to Birkhall to write my name in the book of the Duchess of Albany. Sir Henry Ponsonby and the German Count went with me. As we returned it came on very heavy rain. I dined with the Queen—the Bishop of Rochester and Mrs. Davidson came to dinner. I sat next the Princess Beatrice. After dinner the Princess Henry came to me in the drawing-room to have a talk—she is as charming as she is pretty; then a celebrated player on the violin (Wolff, I think is the name) gave some wonderful performances. The drawing-room is not large, and we sat just like at any other lady's house. After the Queen went to bed I went to the smoking-room with Prince Henry of Battenberg and Prince Christian Victor. I send you all these little details, as I know they will interest you and the girls. Of course they are strictly private.

“The Reays have asked me to spend a day with them at their place in Berwickshire.

“Love to all,

“Ever yours,

“H. H. F.

“Had a beautiful walk this morning in the Balmoral woods.”

“Balmoral Castle,

“September 27th, 1894.

“MY DEAREST LOVE,

“Thanks for Nellie's letter. I do not think that I can go to Cromer. If Rosebery is at Dalmeny when I go South I shall most probably accept his invitation to stay a

* The present Archbishop of Canterbury.

night there—so I should not get home until the 6th of October.

“ I continue to enjoy myself here—lovely day yesterday ; morning in the private grounds and up one of the hills to a cairn. In the afternoon the Bishop of Rochester came over for a walk, and I walked back with him to Abergeldie and had tea with Mrs. Davidson, and I then walked back to the Castle. As I was nearing home getting dusk, the Queen’s carriage passed, and I heard her inquiry as to who I was, and the reply of the lady with her. Directly I went to her in the drawing-room she commenced about my walk, and was interested in my gossip about it, and the Bishop and his wife, whom I thought like her mother, and the Queen did not. We had a small dinner-party and I sat next the Princess Henry, with whom I had a long and interesting talk. After dinner a quiet evening in the drawing-room, where I had a conversation with the Queen. To-day looks as if it is going to be fine, but the sky is uncertain. I have to get off all my work early as the letters are collected at half-past one.

“ I think the *Methodist Times* is right about my career not being unromantic. House of Commons life is so unobserved in its progress that one readily becomes accustomed to the Treasury Bench and the chief seats there—but here, as the Queen’s guest and Minister, with all the surroundings, accentuates the contrasts.

“ Love to all,

“ Ever yours,

“ H. H. F.”

“ Balmoral Castle,

“ Friday, September 28th, 1894.

“ MY DEAREST LOVE,

“ I got your letter yesterday—my post is delivered midday, so that your letters come to me about the middle of the day after they are posted, as mine do to you. And as post and bags go off at two o’clock, one has to finish all correspondence before then—it has the advantage of leaving the afternoon at liberty.

“ Yesterday I had a walk along the old familiar road

towards Braemar. In the afternoon I had a charming drive. The party were the Duchess of Roxburgh, Miss Majendie (the new Maid of Honour), Sir Henry Ponsonby and myself. We went through the Balluchbuie woods at the back of the Castle, and then to the falls of the Grandwalt, where, you and I went with Minnie and Bob when we were last at Braemar. We then went through the woods (private), where we had a good view of Loch Nagar and an exquisite prospect all along the valley of the Dee. We went back along the main road from Invercauld, getting here after six. Dinner-party quite small. I sat between the Duchess and Miss Phipps—quiet evening in the drawing-room, where I had a long and pleasant talk with the Queen. So I settle, you see, into the regular routine of a courtier's life. My time is so fully occupied that I have only read two or three chapters of one of the novels I brought with me. The weather is far better than yours appears to be, but I will not boast, as this morning is cold and looks showery. Stead writes to me that he can safely say that no character sketch he has published for several months has been so widely quoted and so generally commented upon with approval as that of the current month." (One of my father.) "Sorry to miss your letter to-day, but I shall hope to have a double portion to-morrow.

"Yours ever,

"H. H. F."

"Balmoral Castle,

"September 29th, 1894.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

"I am writing before breakfast. My 'charming Princess' passed my window nearly an hour ago on her way to the station (nine miles off), to meet her husband, who is coming this morning. Yesterday I had a lovely walk in the private grounds on the banks of the river—in the afternoon, the Queen allowed us to go and have tea at her cottage, 'The Glassall,' on the shores of Loch Minch, where she sometimes spends the night. The party were Sir H. Ponsonby,

Miss Majendie, Count Hohn, Fraülein Von Plaeckner and myself—we took our tea-basket with us and immensely enjoyed the expedition—it was there and back a three hours' drive through the moors—we saw a fine herd of deer on our return.

"At dinner I sat next the Princess Henry of Prussia, she only between me and the Queen, and I had a conversation with the Queen afterwards in the drawing-room. To-day is not a promising morning, but if it is fine I am going up to the Prince Consort's Cairn.

"Your non-posted letter of Thursday has arrived by the early mail brought by the messenger.

"I wish I could have given Mrs. J——'s husband a chaplaincy.

"I am afraid you will not get this note until Monday morning as there is no second post on Sunday. Thanks for Edith's letter—glad to hear her tale is in the magazines.

"Armitstead has asked Ernest to dinner the night he is going to the Websters'. Love to the girls.

"Ever yours,

"H. H. F."

"Balmoral Castle,

"September 30th.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

"The postal arrangements here on Sunday are rather a mystery. The messenger went early and I fancy that until midnight of to-morrow there is no post, but I will send you a few lines.

"Yesterday was a quiet day—in the afternoon the ladies and myself were to have had a drive, but the Queen commanded the Duchess and the Maid of Honour to go with her, so we had to abandon our expedition. Lord E. Clinton (the new Master of the Household), Sir H. Ponsonby, Sir F. Edwards and myself walked up to the Prince Consort's Cairn, which is on the top of the principal hill about here. We had a grand view, though the sky was cloudy. I dined again with

the Queen. The party was rather larger, as Prince Henry of Prussia has arrived. I sat next the Princess Beatrice; after dinner I had a long talk with the Prince Henry. He is very like his father. I also had a conversation with the Queen. This morning we have had a service in the Chapel in the Castle—more like family worship than a formal service. Two hymns, two lessons, two prayers and a sermon. Princess Beatrice led the singing and played the harmonium. A Mr. Campbell of Dundee preached. The Royal Family, Household and as many of the servants as could get into the room—it is not large—were the congregation.

“Love to the girls, who can see what I have marked about them in the enclosed cutting.

“Ever yours,

“H. H. F.”

“Balmoral Castle,

“1st October, 1894.

“MY DEAREST LOVE,

“I dined again with the Queen last night—only four in addition to the Royalties—viz., the Duchess of Roxburgh, the clergyman who preached, Sir H. Ponsonby and myself. Lovely walk in the afternoon up one of the neighbouring hills.

“I sat at dinner next Princess Henry, and also had a conversation with the Queen. To-day is fine, but the glass is lowering. Love to the girls.

“Ever yours,

“H. H. F.”

“Balmoral Castle,

“October 2nd, 1894.

“MY DEAREST LOVE,

“I do not reply separately to the girls' letters, but they will understand—I am greatly obliged to them for them. Last night we had friends in to dinner—viz., Sir E. and Lady Colebrooke—she was a daughter of Lord Alfred Paget—and her brother, Mr. Paget. I sat between Princess

Beatrice and Lady Colebrooke (she is a beauty, and had the honour of kissing the Queen's cheek when she went away). We had a long drive in the afternoon all about Ballater.

"You will be pleased to hear that although my stay here is so protracted I have not worn my welcome out. The Queen told Dr. Reid yesterday that she was very sorry I was going on Thursday, and added that she liked me very much. I get on very pleasantly with the Household from the Duchess down—she is a wonderful woman—she was a Duchess in attendance on the Queen at her Coronation, and now does not look older than Emma. I have bought the Bazaar Book *Under Lochnagar* from the Minister. It is a souvenir of the visit. I am going this morning after some Balmoral heather honey. The *Review of Reviews* is in demand with the Household here. Sir H. Ponsonby has it just now, and he told me this morning he read it last night.

"I go from here on Thursday to Dalmeny, but I will write you again as to my plans.

"Ever yours,
"H. H. F.

"What the Queen said is strictly private."

'Balmoral Castle,

"October 3rd, 1894.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

Yesterday afternoon we went to Braemar—the old spot—changed horses at the 'Fife Arms,' then on to Mar Lodge to write my name in the Prince of Wales's book, then back to Braemar to tea and home. An exquisite day and fine. No one came to dinner and we had a quiet evening. I sat next the Princess Henry and had my accustomed talk with the Queen in the drawing-room. The Duchess of Roxburgh told me she (the Duchess) was very sorry I was going.

"To-day is lovely—I have bought some Balmoral heather honey and a fine young collie dog for Edith—he will follow in a day or two—they are now difficult to get, and I don't think he is as handsome as our departed Cheviot.

" There is a Cabinet to-morrow. I have no intention of going, but that will interfere with my visit to Dalmeny. I shall most probably sleep at Perth and come home on Friday, but I will telegraph you, if I do not know when the post goes out.

" Love to the girls. Edith's collie is the facsimile of Princess Henry's, which was given to her by Princess Beatrice.

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F.

" The Queen gives me a haunch of venison ! "

" Balmoral Castle,

" Friday before breakfast,

" October 5th, 1894.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" Just a line to say my visit is ending most pleasantly. Prince Henry of Prussia brought his and the Princess's photographs to my room last night with their autographs.

" The Queen was very gracious in the drawing-room. I go to Perth to-night and hope to reach home on Saturday at the same time and to be met as I arranged for Friday.

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F."

On the 21st of October, nearly three weeks after the termination of his delightful and interesting visit he received the following letters :

From the late Prince Christian Victor :

" Cumberland Lodge,

" Windsor Great Park,

" January 19th, 1895.

" DEAR MR. FOWLER,

" By to-day's post I am sending you a photograph of myself which you asked me for at Balmoral ; it was taken last month, hence the delay in not sending it before.

" I am not returning to India as I had intended when I last saw you, as unfortunately some important business has

cropped up which necessitates my staying in England and helping my father; so in 3 or 4 weeks I shall go to Dover to another battalion of the 60th Rifles. I shall regret in many ways not going back, but perhaps it is not a bad thing to get a little home service in. I trust you are in good health, and that I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again soon.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ CHRISTIAN VICTOR OF SCH. HOLSTEIN.”

From Miss Phipps.

“ Balmoral Castle,

“ October 20th, 1894.

“ DEAR MR. FOWLER,

“ At last I send you my photograph of Balmoral with Lord Herschell and Sir Henry Ponsonby—in miniature on the road! The dull skies we have been under of late are the photographer’s excuse for being so slow in printing from my negative.

“ The Queen keeps well, though this wet snow cannot be good for rheumatism.

“ Poor young Lord Drumlanrig’s death has shocked us all greatly. The Queen and everyone here liked him so much.

“ I hope you are having sunnier skies, but we miss you here very much.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ HARRIET L. PHIPPS.”

Another holiday which he enjoyed at Balmoral took place the following year and just when he specially needed one after his severe attack of influenza. Indeed, it was her Majesty’s gracious and womanly consideration that made her select him just then on account of his convalescence as her Minister in Attendance, though it was contrary to precedent that a Secretary of State in the House of Commons should be absent when Parliament was sitting. But the Queen surmised, and rightly, that the air of the Highlands would do more than to restore him to health than any other prescription. He often spoke to us afterwards of her

Majesty's care for him until he was stronger ; commanding him to sit instead of stand during their after-dinner conversations, and when he at first demurred, and expressed a wish to stand, she graciously reproved him by saying : " Then I am afraid our conversation will have to be a very short one."

The following letter he wrote from Balmoral to my mother in June, 1895 :

" Balmoral Castle,

" 16th June, 1895.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" I telegraphed you yesterday. I had a pleasant though long day's journey on Friday, reaching Perth at eight. Early next morning (seven o'clock), I started for Aberdeen, which I reached at nine. Started for Ballater at 9.50—arrived at 11.10 and drove here. The weather and scenery of the journey were exquisite. The drive here was surpassingly beautiful, especially the golden glory of the broom. Lunch and a long walk occupied Saturday. The only other visitors at the Castle are the Countess Erbach, the sister of Prince Henry of Battenberg—a charming German lady—and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Dr. Donald McLeod, the editor of *Good Words*, so we were a small party at dinner. I sat next Princess Beatrice and had long conversations with the Queen during dinner about the Shahzada, in whose movements she is deeply interested. After dinner I had another long talk with the Queen—at the close of which she ordered me to sit down. This morning Dr. McLeod has preached. Last evening it was light till between 10 and 11. It is cold ; I have a fire in my room and need warm clothing. The landscape beauty of yesterday—spring beauty which I had never seen before—was surpassingly fine, and the air is charming.

" We shall have a great function here on Tuesday, the opening of the Church.

" Love to the girls,

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F."

" Balmoral Castle,

" June 17th, 1895.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" Yesterday's letters except the early post may not be delivered to-day so I wired you this morning.

" I dined with the Queen last night and sat between the Countess Erbach and the bride-elect." (Miss McNeil, who was just engaged to the Duke of Argyll.) " I duly congratulated her. The Princess Beatrice, with whom I had a long and sitting conversation in the drawing-room, was most pleased to accept a copy of Edith's book, which has been sent upstairs this morning.

" Miss McNeil will also have a copy. The Queen was very pleasant and gracious, and I had a long chat with her.

" To-morrow is the Church function. The weather, though inclined to showers, is very fine and to-day is much warmer.

" Love to the girls,

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F."

" Balmoral Castle,

" 18th June.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" Awfully wet this morning for the Church opening ! I am all right and enjoying myself. I sat next the Queen last night at dinner, between her and Princess Beatrice. The little daughter of the latter (to whom I have given a copy of Edith's book) when she heard that so many clergymen were coming to-day, asked if they were ' all going to preach.'

" The Queen was told by Miss McNeil about Edith's book, and about the Princess having a copy, and expressed her desire to see it. She was very pleasant at dinner and we talked about things and books and people. Dr. Cameron Lees is staying here. Prince Henry returned from London yesterday.

" Service gone off very well. Dr. Donald McLeod preached an admirable sermon.

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F."

" Balmoral Castle,

" June 19th, 1895.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" Wet, wet, all yesterday and last night—this morning is a shade better.

" We had a big luncheon yesterday of the clergy and people at the Church opening and I made the acquaintance of the great leaders of the Kirk—*e.g.*, Dr. Story, Dr. Macgregor and Dr. Cameron Lees. The Queen sent for me in the afternoon and we remained talking until a discreet footman announced to her Majesty that it was five minutes to six! I dined and sat between Princess Beatrice and Lady —, who is a very godly and nice woman.

" The Countess Erbach told me that she had begun to read Edith's 'pretty book,' and she talked of translating it into German, so I offered to present her with a copy, which she accepted. I sent it up to her this morning and enclose her reply for Edith.

" At present my intention is to sleep at Perth to-morrow evening and come from there on Friday by the day train.

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F."

" Balmoral Castle,

" Thursday.

" MY DEAREST LOVE,

" As I did not get a letter from you this forenoon I thought I had better telegraph to know how you all are, although I suppose you thought that the post would not be delivered before I left. I dined with the Queen last night—very small party, only eight in all. She was very pleasant, and after she went upstairs she sent me an engraving of herself and her children and grandchildren as a memento of my visit. I hope to be with you to-morrow at dinner.

" Ever yours,

" H. H. F.

" When I thanked her Majesty on bidding her good-night she said how pleased she had been to see me."

The above letters seem to show that it was the incentive to enjoyment that my father lacked rather than the power of it. If in his own ordinary life a picnic with a tea-basket had been suggested, he would have shrunk from the idea with horror, and said, why could not people take their meals comfortably at home, but when a tea-picnic was arranged, stamped with a Sovereign's sanction, and therefore possessing an importance beyond any question of mere pleasure, he enjoyed it extremely. Recreation was to him so rarely worth while ; but once draw him into it with cords strong enough to claim his interest and his effort, and it became quite another thing. It was always a necessity to my father's real self to be called upon to make an effort. An effort intellectually, an effort socially, an effort of any kind he responded to, and it brought out all that was best in him. But he was never enough of an artist to be, or to do, anything which was only of value to himself for the sake of what he had himself put into it. The love of work for the work's sake would never have drawn out his powers ; his work was a means, not an end. To the artistic temperament the work is always the end. So to the latter the possession of an attribute which is beautiful in itself is enough—to be charming is to be charming, what matter the environment. But my father rarely put forth his charm of manner unless a distinct claim called for it ; then few could be more charming than he. Where there was no effort he was often misunderstood and never appreciated. Effort is the keynote of progress and progress was his watchword, therefore the necessity for effort was a necessity of his existence.

CHAPTER XXXI

IMPRESSIONS

"The memory of the just is blessed."—*Proverbs of Solomon.*

"For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches."
BACON.

"My dear, dear lord,
The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation."

SHAKESPEARE.

LORD MORLEY writes to me :

"I do not feel that I can help you in your book by any element of particular novelty or interest, but I should be sorry to seem negligent in anything intended to do honour to your father. If I had only kept a continuous diary of my Parliamentary life, I should have found his name on many a page, for our relations in all the chances and changes of this time were close and unbroken.

"We entered the House of Commons almost together, and we quitted it together; and during the five- or eight-and-twenty intervening years, first below the gangway, then for two short spells of office, followed by two long spells of opposition, we sat on the green benches side by side, shared party counsels, discussed public affairs morning, noon and night, and enjoyed the satisfaction of cordial friendship, and as I make bold to hope, mutual respect.

"The party had just achieved a prodigious victory. Never did such fortune turn so swiftly. The first five years of your father's Parliamentary life were a time of unparalleled embarrassment for the Government that he came

to Westminster to support. Bradlaugh, Parnell, Gordon, Majuba—the names only hint at a portion of the chapter of ministerial trouble.

“Mr. Gladstone’s authority was still enormous both inside the House and outside. Yet irresponsible aspirants behind him came to have some searching of heart, and the prospect was obscure. As it fell out during the twenty years that followed Mr. Gladstone’s defeat in 1885, we were only in power, so to call it, for three years and a half. Such was the fortune of war. But Parliament went on, and your father was born for the House of Commons. His public life and all his purposes in public life through his whole heart and mind, were centred in it. He acquired an unsurpassed command over its procedure, and over all the technical arts, devices, skilful computations and expedients, that are honourably essential to the successful transaction of the national business within its walls.

“Though not without a perfectly legitimate and laudable personal ambition, he gloried in the House of Commons, not because success there opens the way to the sceptres and thrones of politics; not because an athlete exulting in thews and sinews for debate there finds his grandest arena; nor because, like Cobden and Bright, he had any particular cause to fight, or doctrine to expound, or set of principles to enforce. It delighted him, because his master passion, without prejudice to his earnest interest in deeper and more mysterious things, was an insatiable appetite for affairs. For the conduct and unfolding of the mighty drama of national affairs in all their varying phases, scenes, and episodes—dull, exciting, elevated, slack, irrelevant, intense—Parliament is the great imperial theatre. It was all a scene of irresistible attraction to him. He was never one of the tribe of politicians, often even men of plenty of talent, who insist on pushing and elbowing their way forward. But he rapidly showed his aptitude and capacity to play a worthy and a helpful part, as he had amply shown before on a less conspicuous stage.

“He could not be other than an admirable and powerful speaker anywhere; but I never felt that he was half so much

at home on the platform as in the House. I do not in truth think that he looked with much favour on that immense prominence into which Mr. Gladstone first brought the platform, not merely as an engine for a particular agitation, but as a standing piece of our daily political machinery, in the famous campaigns that ended in the sweeping triumph of 1880. He very speedily made a high mark in debate. He became one of the not very many men of whom we can truly say that the House was always glad when he got up, for it knew that he was sure to prove master of his case, and sure to put it with the plain, direct, and completely intelligible force, that is a safe key to the interest and confidence of parliamentary assemblies. He was always vigorous, exact, manly, fair, searching, argumentative, civil, and on one marked and well-known occasion, he showed himself capable of producing genuine and decisive oratorical effect. Singularly free from what is called the forensic tone, he never fell into the tiresome error of forgetting that he was addressing a common jury, and not the Master of the Rolls, sitting with three equity judges. I often used to say to him, ungraciously and presumptuously enough, what a success he would have had at the bar and on the bench, how shrewd and capable an advocate and how impressive a judge, if he had taken his clear head, his turn for common sense, his gifts of lucid exposition and logical reasoning, into the law-courts, instead of bringing them to the House of Commons. But he would never yield, for the House was his idol, and a noble idol it was.

“Of the political hardihood, that is sometimes a frightful danger, and sometimes a sovereign gift, he had little share. He had neither the ardour that is always thirsting for the frontal attack, nor the dogged sort of hardihood that with steady eye and firm heart, patiently defies time and casual circumstance. Great high ventures were foreign to his temperament, and when duty drew him into them, he would hardly have gone even the length of Milton’s language about modest feasts of music and wine, that he who of these delights can judge, and spare to interpose them oft, is not unwise.

With cheap gammon and patter about the evils of party, I think he had no sort of sympathy. He knew them well enough, as we all do; he was as critical as we all are, of the party tactics or party strategy of the hour, whether on our own side, or still more readily on the other.

"Though he sometimes distrusted the counsels of his own party, he distrusted the counsels of the party opposite a hundred times more. Though now and then overmuch of a Cassandra, he stuck manfully to the ship. He was by all his temperament, training, and habits of thought, Right Centre; in other words, he thought you could not govern England against the middle classes. I used to think him a little too sensitive about the newspapers, but then he had not written so many leading articles as I had. He was a good reader of books, and a serious judge of them; fond of many kinds of knowledge; splendidly free of the lazy ignorance that is indifferent to knowing better; and he was able in a plain working way to take the measure of men's competence to have a right to a leading opinion on the things they were talking about. People thought he was without the saving grace of humour, and in fact he did not often show a native turn for starting humorous points or phrases. But if a friend applied a fugitive dose of jest, epigram, ironic incident, I have never known anybody heartier or more spontaneous in response.

"He never had a spark or trace of the personal jealousy or rivalry that sometimes make a shabby speck even in upright politicians. As a colleague he was the most loyal of men. We always found him—to use Harcourt's standing word about him—'serviable,' infinitely ready to help, to oblige, and to lend all the fruits of his experiences in many branches of public work, to those of us who were weak where he was strong. He could deal very faithfully with a man if he liked, and had a fair command of the wholesome vocabulary of contempt for political folly and imposture. At times he could wear a manner that might seem to those who did not know him, over confident, but I often thought he would have done

his knowledge and common sense still more justice, if he had been twice as self-confident as he was.

"The ancients, as they are called, drew some public offices by lot, and a satirist might perhaps find a parallel in Cabinet appointments among us English moderns. Your father did not choose either of his two Cabinet posts, yet everybody knew that to whatever post the lot might bring him, he was certain to do it well. And so, as the people who knew him will tell you, undoubtedly he did. He fully understood the drift of the biblical injunction, often quoted by me for our common refreshment in dark days: 'Seekest thou great things, seek them not.' Search in these high matters seldom being the best way of finding.

"Like such admirable public men as Sir James Graham, Nature did not mean him to be a great Commander, but he was the best type of strong and valuable henchman. And last of all, as I had many a chance of discovery, he was in other than political relations, a downright and constant good friend. On one critical occasion a dozen years ago, when party captains and crew on our side were pretty sharply divided as to compass, chart, bearings, course, reckonings and all the rest of it, he and I held strongly opposed views. A certain war that in his judgment was inevitable and indispensable, seemed to me an uncompensated blunder or worse. The peril to our long habits of intimacy and confidence was formidable, but thanks mainly to him, I am sure, we turned the corner safely.

"This little fragment has gone far enough, and I offer it to you with much humility and sincerity."

I am indebted to Lord Rosebery for the following most true understanding of my father during their comparatively short association:

"38, Berkeley Square, W.

"June 25th, 1912.

"DEAR MRS. HAMILTON,

"You ask me to write a few words about your father. They must indeed be few, for his death is so recent

that he has not yet passed into the domain of history where alone statesmen can be equitably judged. Moreover, I only knew a part of him; a small portion of his life, measured in years, and even within those limits of time I knew nothing of his home-life which reveals so much. Our acquaintance practically began, I think, when we were colleagues in the Cabinet of 1892, and our relations certainly became even more intimate after the fall of that Government in 1895, and continued so till the formation of the Government of 1905, which he joined, and I did not. After that our paths separated and we met more rarely, though with unabated cordiality.

"I knew your father as a friend and a political friend during this period, and it is of my experience of his friendship that I wish to testify. There never was one more thorough, more genuine, more true. He had, too, that unusual gift of candour without offence which is so rare and refreshing a feature of friendship in public life. The value of the candid friend in politics depends upon his honesty. He may be of that kind from which Canning prayed to be delivered as the greatest of all plagues that an angry heaven can send; a person who under the cloak of ingenuousness deals malicious and murderous stabs. But there is another rare, and choice category of candid friends to which your father belonged. He told the truth as he found it in him, kindly but sincerely. That is the best kind of friend in public affairs. There is another perhaps more useful, but on a lower plane, the one who can feel the pulse of the public of a party and diagnose its beat. But the able man of high capacity who takes the trouble to speak his convictions honestly and fully to his friend in political life is beyond rubies.

"Of your father's capacity it is needless for me to speak, for it is sealed and secure by general reputation. In council he was a man of broad judgment and ripe wisdom, not always sufficiently translated into action and speech. He was, indeed, rather a man of deliberation than audacity. As to speech again he did not speak nearly enough in the judgment of his friends, or sufficiently to impress his personality on

the country. Had he used his great powers more generally and less cautiously he must have stamped himself more deeply on his generation. But he was not an extreme politician and could not soberly applaud extremes. Moreover, he was not satisfied without a mature statement of his case with all the power he could impart to it. That sagacious fastidiousness limited the number of his deliverances, but also imparted a singular value to his annual addresses in his constituency. It must also be remembered that he had ascended to a high pinnacle in oratory from which he may have dreaded to descend even for a moment ; he may, in a word, have been afraid of his own reputation. If that were so, he was not to be blamed, for his great speech on the Cotton Duties was perhaps the only one that ever converted a whole party in these days, or indeed in any other.

"Be that as it may, he left behind him a name of unsullied repute, the fame of great capacity, both revealed and undeveloped, and with me, at any rate, the memory of precious friendship.

"R."

Lord Haldane writes :

•
"As a debater Lord Wolverhampton showed great power. I remember well the impression of capacity in wielding this weapon which he invariably made on us who were his colleagues in the House of Commons. He had a splendid voice, and, in addition, the gift of throwing into the act of speech the whole force of his personality, whether or not the occasion was one for which he was prepared, he rarely failed to convey the impression of mastery of his weapon. This gift from nature made him a most formidable opponent, and one of the very best speakers at a time when fine speakers were not rare. His effectiveness as a debater was enhanced by a far-reaching and accurate knowledge of modern Parliamentary records. • No one was more ready with an illustration of the way in which a crisis had been handled on a similar occasion by preceding statesmen, or in displaying with striking

vividness the consequences which had on previous occasions attended departure from principle. He could do this as effectively in defence as in attack. His great speech on the Indian Cotton Duties question was assisted by the possession of this quality.

“ But though formidable alike in attack or defence, he was essentially a man of moderate views. His position in the public mind was largely due to the fact that he was accounted to be of safe and sound judgment. He rarely proceeded to extremities in the statement of a political creed, and on this account he was the more effective. He never varied in characteristics, so far as my observation went. The Mr. Fowler of the eighties was not different from the Lord Wolverhampton of twenty years after. He was deeply interested in what the British public expects a politician to have at heart, and rarely forgives him if he neglects it—Finance. This interest gave continuity to his method of approaching great questions, and was a source of strength.

“ It is always difficult to write an adequate appreciation for those who did not know him at first hand of a statesman whose name is not associated with any far-reaching and dramatic reform. It is therefore not easy to convey how much the name of Henry Fowler was on the lips of his colleagues in the House of Commons, through many years. But his personality was constantly being impressed on those colleagues and on the whole House. And the reason was, that he was a man who stood for a type of public opinion that had to be reckoned with, and stood for it strongly. This and certain remarkable natural gifts rendered it inevitable that he should impress himself on a succession of Parliaments.

“ HALDANE OF CLOAN.”

Lord Brassey sends me this tribute :

“ It is a privilege to be permitted to add an appreciation to those many tributes of friendship which will be brought together in the biography of your lamented father.

" My words must be few. You will have abundant testimony from those in positions of the highest eminence. I look back over many years, in which, as one of the rank and file, I was associated with your father, and I followed him as one of my most revered leaders both in and out of Parliament. As a statesman he had my unreserved confidence. He was a sound Liberal—never a revolutionary. He was distinguished in an eminent degree for sober judgment. He was a sane Imperialist. Whether in debate in Parliament or in the private exchange of views, he rose far above the contentions of party. He was loyal. He was disinterested.

" As an administrator he had the advantage of a wide experience. He had been a lawyer in large practice. He was a man of affairs, in close touch with enterprise and business of many kinds.

" Living in a hive of industry he knew the condition of the workers in the Midlands. He knew where the shoe pinches for the many. He knew what was urgent to be done, to improve the condition of the people.

" On his appointment as Secretary of State for India your father worked with ardour and consummate ability in a new sphere. He rapidly acquired a strong grasp of Indian affairs. He made admirable speeches on India in the House of Commons.

" Your father was an orator of no mean gifts. I have heard him in Parliament, and on many platforms. He was lucid in exposition, convincing in argument, felicitous in the choice of words, in tone and manner—a most agreeable speaker.

" It were out of place to dwell on your father's commanding authority as the representative of those great companies of earnest men, who do not belong to the Anglican communion. Their confidence was grounded not less in reverence for his high character than in the knowledge of his ability to plead the cause of religious liberty.

" In private life your father made friends wherever he went. When in attendance at Balmoral he was a *persona gratissima* to all members of the Household. It was delightful to see

how warmly they welcomed him when he came down to Windsor. I was on duty as Lord-in-Waiting. •I never saw my valued friend in happier vein. The regard was mutual.

“My wife and I have the kindest personal memories of your father. When staying at Hastings he sometimes drove over to Normanhurst. We remember other meetings, and especially some charming walks in the green glades of Skibo Castle. In those pleasant places *procul negotiis*, far from the madding crowd, listening to your father’s discoursing with the mellow wisdom of the riper years on things both new and old, we seem to rise to a higher plane. In his company we had some golden hours, long past but not forgotten.

“It is well that your father’s life should be written. It will offer an inspiring example to many readers. It was nobly spent in the service of his country.

“It will be for you, his daughter, to bear testimony to your father’s private virtues. That grateful task will not be neglected. Your home, as I well know, was a happy place.

“BRASSEY.”

Bishop Boyd Carpenter, who as Bishop of Ripon for so many years knew my father well, says :

“There are some men round whose memory racy and pregnant anecdotes seem naturally to gather ; the lives of such men will always be popular ; but the drawback of such lives lies in the risk that the real personality of the man may be lost sight of in a crowd of amusing and mirth-provoking stories. Perhaps, therefore, we may say, happy is the man whose personality is not obscured by tales more or less legendary, which cluster round his memory, and who is remembered for himself alone. I am led to this reflection when I recall the late Lord Wolverhampton—though I can recall the innocently sly smile which rose to his face when he was about to break into kindly banter—what remains with me, however, is a sense of his quiet and self-contained personality ; he bore himself as one who had fought a good

fight and was happy in his success, but there were none of those shallow arts and assumed affectations which mar the success of less stable characters. Whatever his achievements had been—and they are written in our public history—he never lost the quiet, steady influence of inner piety; he was what he had ever been, a man of simple faith, good sagacity, great kindliness, and faithful affection. I write as I felt about him; his personality remains with me as that of a single-minded man, guided by steadfast principle and unspoiled faith."

Lord Crewe writes :

" July 5th, 1912.

" I had for a long time enjoyed the friendly acquaintance of Mr. Henry Fowler as it subsists between men linked by party ties and enjoying common friendships, but divided by a stretch of nearly thirty years; and during the period between 1892 and 1895, when he was so conspicuous a Parliamentary figure, I was but little in London. It was not until the Government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was formed at the close of 1905 that we were thrown into a closer relation, and met more regularly. From 1908, when Sir Henry Fowler became Lord Wolverhampton, we sat daily side by side in Parliament. There are many, however, more qualified than I am to speak of his official career, and of his political activities during the ten years of Liberal Opposition after the summer of 1895; I had not even the good fortune to be present at the famous debate of the 21st February in that year, when, as Secretary of State for India, he achieved on the critical subject of the Indian Cotton Duties one of the rarest of Parliamentary feats, by winning over to enthusiastic agreement a dubious and variously hostile House of Commons.

" I have often regretted that the fortune of parties prevented him from coming to the House of Lords earlier. He was seventy-eight years old when he joined us, and though I can testify gratefully to the pluck and cheerfulness with

which he engaged in many debates, some physical vigour was wanting to an oratory, which, both in matter and manner, would have been peculiarly acceptable to the peers.

"As a colleague, and in Council, his opinions never failed to receive the consideration they merited if they did not always command full agreement. He never wavered, I believe, in his devotion to civil and religious liberty; but some of the later movements within the Liberal party seemed to run counter to his primary convictions. Like not a few public men as they advance in years, he mistrusted, and sometimes dreaded, undisciplined enthusiasms and new departures; but he retained the faculty of feeling and expressing deep moral indignation, thus differing from many whose reasonable and balanced caution, by impoverishing and attenuating the efforts of their experience, tends to weaken their influence with the younger generation. Nobody could at any time doubt the seriousness with which he approached social and political problems, or his belief in the good ordering of the world.

"Of my private recollections of Henry Fowler, none are pleasanter than those which recur with the titles of every book by his daughter, Mrs. Felkin. I recall his delight in their wit and invention, his not too marked parental partiality, and his pleasure at the wide appreciation of them shown by the public. In general, my memories are all of his generous friendship and goodwill."

The following extract from a letter to me from Lord Halsbury may be taken as typical of the position my father held in the estimation of many of those who were opposed to him in politics:

"In one sense I knew your father very well. I always knew him as the same straightforward, direct and able advocate of the side he had espoused in politics. I need not say I always respected his opinions, even where I differed. I remember he and I agreed from time to time upon things upon which we were both of different views from the views

of those with whom we generally acted. We differed from the policy of abolishing the different courts of Westminster Hall, and we were right, as experience, I think, since proved. I remember sitting with him in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and there, as everywhere else, I found him the same firm advocate of what was right, and of what he and I believed to be the truth: and I think it might be said of him what a poet has put into the mouth of his hero, 'He hath the right, aye, though each word were fire.' Although our friendship was but for a brief period, it was one of which I always was, and always shall be, proud.

"Believe me always,

"Faithfully yours,

"HALSBURY."

Lord Justice Fletcher Moulton, who knew my father as a lawyer, writes :

"Lord Wolverhampton was a lawyer, by nature and predilection as well as by profession. Law was in his eyes one of the great formative influences by which both individual and national character are shaped, and as such it was of permanent interest to him. The elaborate technicalities of equity which still govern so much of our laws of real property and the scarcely less intricate developments of the law of contracts had no attraction for him. But there was no subject which consciously or unconsciously influenced his thoughts more than the obligations which arise out of relationships and more especially the reciprocal obligations of the citizen and of the State whether resting on our common law or formulated by statute.

"True to the national characteristics of our jurisprudence he regarded all this vast field of law primarily from the point of view of the individual. Our law is the outcome of the struggle of the individual in defence of his personal liberty and for the recognition that his rights are inviolable, whether those rights be peculiar to himself or possessed in common

with other members of the community. These last-named rights in his view could only be secured by well-organized self-government, and the extension of that self-government into every department of organized national life was his idea of true national growth. It follows that such a task as the conduct of the Parish Councils Bill was typically congenial to him. It was an advance in the direction of more complete self-government along lines which were essentially those of our national progress in the past, and therefore it gave good hope of being an abiding part of the national life of the future. This was sufficient to secure his sympathy. Schemes of government according to foreign models had no share of his favour or his faith. He realized that law in this sense is part of the national development, and that to ensure its permanent usefulness it must be the outcome of national habits of mind and life.

“ His qualities came out most strikingly in connection with Constitutional Law. This is law still in process of formation as were Common Law and Equity during centuries in the past, but in this case the growth is slower and more fitful. It rarely forms the subject of formal decisions, which, in a growing law, mark and make permanent the advances that have secretly and silently been made. As in the case of International Law, it is difficult at any moment to distinguish between what has already become law and what is still in the condition of approved tradition, respected but not binding. To give to an individual authority in this realm of law there must be an intimate knowledge of the history of the past coupled with mental sympathy for all that makes for orderly government. Lord Wolverhampton possessed all this in an eminent degree, and his influence was always helpful to the growth of respect for and obedience to those political traditions which have hitherto formed an unwritten code regulating our self-government. In this his loss will be sorely felt. The tendency of to-day in all countries is to regard as permissible all that which is not prohibited by positive law, and there is an almost universal tendency to refuse to be

bound by rules that cannot be enforced. It remains to be seen whether this will suffice for the needs of self-governing nations. It certainly exposes them to ruder shocks in their national development and makes it more difficult to secure that advance shall be permanent.

•“ In all this domain Lord Wolverhampton possessed both abundant knowledge and, what is far rarer, a true legal interest, and if the slower progress along traditional lines with which he was most fully in sympathy is out of keeping with the impatience of to-day he evidenced, in its best form, how law, rightly conceived, not only is in harmony with progress, but can inspire and sustain it.”

The Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell sends me the following impression of my father at his club :

“ When Mr. Gladstone (who was not quite at his happiest on a social occasion) was laying the foundation-stone of the National Liberal Club, he damped the ardour of his audience with this depreciatory comment on clubs : ‘ Speaking generally, I should say there could not be a less interesting occasion than the laying of a foundation-stone of a club in London. For, after all, what are the clubs of London ? I am afraid little else than temples of luxury and ease.’ No doubt those words, though they have a disparaging sound, fairly describe the prime purpose of a club. For ‘ luxury ’ read ‘ comfort,’ with efficiency and moderate prices , and you have the first use of a club. Add ‘ ease ’—freedom from the worries of home or family, and liberty to say what one thinks—and you have the second. A third, and certainly not less important, is the exchange of gossip. This is what Pennialinus means, when writing his London Letter in the *Drumblie Dictator*, he says that : ‘ The clubs to-night are full of excitement about Mr. Popkins’s rumoured resignation,’ or ‘ The report that the German Emperor, disguised as a nigger minstrel, has been found spying on the beach at Brighton is widely discredited at the clubs.’ A fourth use of, at any rate, some clubs is study ; and at the

Athenæum or the Reform Club the library is as much frequented as the billiard-room or the dining-room. •

“ Now it happens that Mr. Fowler, Sir Henry Fowler, Lord Wolverhampton—to give him his successive designations—and I belonged to the same club, and I am asked to describe his club-life. This forces me to consider him in relation to all these foregoing points, and, after a careful survey, I am bound to say that he did not seem to touch life at any of them. I will take them one by one. Luxury certainly did not appeal to him, though ‘ comfort,’ ‘ efficiency’ and ‘ moderate prices’ may have done so. He liked, if I remember aright, the kind of food which Sir Henry Thompson considered to be the root of all our national evils—‘ plain roast and boiled.’ Temperate to a fault, he drank one glass of sherry in a bottle of soda-water, and looked none the more cheerful for it. But ‘ efficiency,’ as meaning a joint in good cut and a punctual waiter, suited him, and ‘ moderate prices’ suit us all. Of ‘ ease’ in a club he had no notion. Perhaps he had enough or too much of it at home. Anyhow, he bustled into the club as a solicitor might bustle into his office, or a stockbroker into ‘ the House,’ looking as if he were oppressed by a thousand cares and as if every moment were precious. I don’t think he ever lounged, or sat back in a deep arm-chair, or fell into that fitful slumber which so irritates the man who is on the watch for the sleeper’s paper. No—he came to the club with definite objects in view—to get his luncheon, to read the evening paper, or to look up something in a book of reference. There seemed to be nothing superficial about his reading: whatever he read, he read it with concentration and thoroughness and for a practical purpose. The lively oracles of Hansard, and the bound volumes of the *Times*, were objects of his fervent study, for in them he could find material for those crushing reminders in which political speakers delight: ‘ What did Mr. Balfour say in 1885?’ ‘ Such sentiments come strangely from the Duke of Devonshire, who, when Lord Hartington, etc., etc.’ He neither smoked nor played billiards, nor took a hand at the whist-

table. My memory does not connect him with the library, but I feel sure that if he ever went there it was to read a political memoir or Mr. Herbert Paul's *History of Modern England*. Again he never came to the club for gossip. If he chanced to meet a friend, he was willing enough to talk; but his talk could not be called gossip. It was substantial, business-like, and serious. Of private and personal matters he never spoke, except to announce that his health required the window to be shut, or to whisper a word of honest pleasure in some recent performance of his gifted family. But the bulk of his talk was political, and then indeed it was not serious only but lugubrious. According to Fowler, everything was for the worst in this worst of all possible worlds. If the Liberals were out of office, they would remain out for a long time to come. 'The extreme men were playing the mischief. Compromise' (which he himself adored) 'was out of fashion, and common sense had fled to Jupiter and Saturn.' If, by way of a change, the Liberals were in office, disaster was always impending. 'The by-elections were going against us. The majority on the last division was alarmingly small. The *Skibbereen Eagle* had a most mischievous leader, and its effects would spread far beyond Skibbereen. The whole thing was rotten' (this with indescribable emphasis), 'and, when we went to the country, some of us would be unpleasantly surprised.' If there were any elements of joy in the political situation, Fowler, when addressing his fellow-clubmen, kept them locked in his own bosom. In general society, in his own house, or even in the House of Commons, he would be cheerful and chatty, but he left those qualities behind him (perhaps as feeling that they would be out of place) when he crossed the threshold of the 'Sarcophagus.' To him a club was no temple of 'luxury and ease,' no bureau for the exchange of jokes or rumours. Dr. Johnson defined a club as 'an assembly of good fellows meeting under certain conditions.' He would have pronounced Fowler not a 'clubable' man, and would, I fear, have detested his typically Nonconformist virtues of seriousness, strenuousness, and unremitting industry."

Now true as this snapshot is, my father was not in reality as lugubrious as he appeared. That spirit of compromise, which he adored, was an ingredient of his character as well as of his policy. In the cheerful atmosphere of a club he was gloomy and depressed ; in the dark seasons of trouble and anxiety he was calm and optimistic. In order to adjust the balance between joy and sorrow, he was ever ready to weep with them that rejoiced, and to rejoice with them that wept.

The Right Hon. Arthur Balfour writes :

“ 4, Carlton Gardens,

“ Pall Mall, S.W.

“ November 22nd, 1911.

“ DEAR MRS. HAMILTON,

“ I knew your father from his first entry into the House of Commons, and I well remember on hearing his first speech thinking that he had a distinguished career before him.

“ Your father's character and ability stand out so clearly and simply from the mere narrative of his achievements that any impression is quite superfluous.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.”

CHAPTER XXXII

THE LAST YEAR

"The night falls, and the watchman cries,
'All's well.'"

S. R. LYSAGHT.

"Merit and good work is the end of man's motion, and conscience of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest: for if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest."—BACON.

THE first warning note was struck one day in November, 1909, when I went with my father for his usual Saturday afternoon walk. We had just reached Tettenhall Towers, about a mile from our own house, when I noticed that he looked extremely grey and pale. I asked if he felt ill, and he owned to doing so. We went in and he had some brandy immediately, and sat still for about half an hour, while I telephoned for a cab, which took us back to Woodthorne. We had a trained nurse at that time in the house attending on my mother; and though she found his pulse recovered since the little attack, whatever it might have been, we sent for Dr. Coleman, our medical attendant, to examine him thoroughly. He told my father that this must be a warning to him not to live so strenuous a life, and also to take more food. My father went about so much alone, and not feeling hungry, he was very apt to neglect his meals. On close investigation we discovered, to our dismay, that on one day of the previous week, he had gone up to London by the eight o'clock train, having his breakfast at home at seven a.m. He had done a day's work in London, which included a Privy Council, an audience of the King, and a long Cabinet Council, and then he caught the four-thirty express which brought him home to dinner at eight o'clock.

During the whole of the day he had had nothing to eat or drink. He was then a man of seventy-nine years of age.

After this incident I noticed a distinct change in him physically. The sad day had dawned for us—his children—when we first realized that we were older than our parents. But even two months later, on the 4th January, 1910, he addressed a huge meeting of his old constituents in the Agricultural Hall in Wolverhampton, where he had held his annual great meetings for nearly thirty years. He spoke for over an hour, though he mostly read his speech, but it was an infinitely pathetic sight to see the veteran statesman, facing for the last time, the men of his old constituency, the meeting being held in support of the candidature of the present Member—Mr. G. R. Thorne—during the election campaign. His voice had lost much of its old force, but none of its old clearness ; and owing to that tender solicitude which every man in that vast audience felt for his old friend and representative, his words could be for the most part heard in the perfect and considerate silence which the meeting as a mass accorded him. He gave a short review of recent politics, he eulogized the work of the Government to which he then belonged, and with a characteristic touch of fairness, even when it was not the most popular way of putting the facts, he stated simply that the Act which would reflect the greatest credit upon the Government, was that of Old Age Pensions, and that, in his opinion, Mr. Chamberlain was entitled to claim the authorship of that great boon, which had been rightly called the Old People's Magna Charta ; and he would not in the slightest degree detract from the honour so justly due to him. But no practical scheme for carrying out this reform was ever submitted to Parliament by the Government to which that great statesman belonged. It was left to Mr. Asquith in his second Budget, during Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's premiership, to lay the foundation of a scheme by which the pensions could be provided, a scheme which was now an integral part of our national finance. He spoke of the Government's pledge to remove the pauper disqualification, but added : " In justice to the tax-payer the Government was bound not to yield to a great many applications made for increasing the various conditions under which the pensions

were granted. And some members, of whom he in the old days would have been one, considered it better to get what was possible rather than risk the chance of this great measure." He spoke, too, of the glorious reform carried out in the Children's Act, which was, in fact, the Bill in which he took the greatest interest in the House of Lords, of the opening of the South African Federal Parliament, and of the Government's general legislation. When speaking of the additional cost of much of the legislation he said that great changes could not be done for nothing, and asked where the deficit of £16,000,000 that year was to come from? "Out of the Budget," some one cried; and with a flash of his old readiness my father answered, "Yes, but you have got to put something into the Budget before you can get everything out of it." The whole speech sounded as a muffled echo of those strong, fire-filled speeches of former days, but true, as an echo must be, to the spirit and temper which he had always shown. Fairness to an opponent—generous rather than merely just—triumph in legislation which benefited the poor and old, and particularly the widows, who have a special claim on the care of a Christian country. Justice to the tax-payer; the necessity for compromise—to take what was possible and not wait for the sake of getting more; loyalty to his own party and full appreciation of its efforts. All these were truly part of my father's political character, and as he sounded note after note, we felt the full harmony of these last lines. The man himself as he stood looking down on the vast audience, though his hand trembled and his voice quavered, yet seemed so like the stalwart statesman who had led them for so long that it was hard to realize, even for those who did realize it, that he would never speak to a mass meeting again. An election was in full swing; the tide surged on, the river swept past, and few perhaps saw the pathos of that lonely figure which uttered its good-bye in its God-speed. They gave him a right royal reception, they shouted themselves hoarse in loyal, and I might surely add, affectionate appreciation, and then they went on, while only a few of us felt that he could not march on with them any longer. He could only mark time amid the clattering march past; he had reached the farthest limit of his earthly career.

We had hoped that my father would have gone out of office when his party did; that a change of Government would have come when a change for him was compulsory, and that thus he might have been spared the shock of a break from his official life. But it was not to be so. The Liberal Government survived the General Election of 1910, and then a serious difficulty confronted us.

What man realizes the limitations of age—what woman has the heart to remind him of them? We of his household felt that the time had fully come when he should relinquish the reins of office, and yet the doctors dreaded for him the shock of any change lest it might snap the taut and time-worn thread. The Government's fortunes were uncertain, and still we looked for a natural course of events to free him from a burden which he was no longer fit to carry. On the day of the opening of Parliament as Lord President of the Council, his duties were active ones, and though his private secretary, Mr. Stanley, whose kindness and consideration for my father will never be forgotten by those who valued it, especially reminded him to have a proper luncheon in the midst of that arduous day, he forgot all about it, the result being that he arrived at the Privy Council office after the pageant in almost a state of collapse. Every persuasion was used to induce him to go quietly back to the Reform Club where he had had a permanent room for many years, and to receive medical aid; but it was not an easy matter, it was sometimes an impossible one, to guide my father into a course which he felt to be away from his duties. On the following day he insisted on attending a Cabinet Council, though Mr. Stanley did all he could to dissuade him, seeing how ill he was. One of the Ministers present told me afterwards that he believed that he was barely conscious throughout that meeting, and by this time his secretary had wisely telephoned to Eltham for his son-in-law, Mr. Felkin, the only member of his family within reach. They took my father to the Club, and a doctor was then summoned, under whose advice, though he had then rallied amazingly, he was taken down to his home at Woodthorne on the following day. The attack passed, but it had wrought havoc which was never repaired. The end was in sight,

even though he recovered himself in a wonderful manner, and still clung to the hope of continuing his work. Then it was, during a most difficult and distressing time, that the friendship and loyal affection of Mr. Asquith stood out, as it will ever stand out in our memories, in a consideration and patience and tenderness, which men rarely show to each other in this working-day world. The ladder of political promotion is steep and few are the rungs in it; impatient are the climbers, and few are their chances, for the lives of Governments are short, and men must make the most of them lest time and opportunity alike are gone. But the strong hand of the Prime Minister held back those who would push up, and saved his old friend from the risk of what might have been a fatal fall.

While my father was trying to recuperate Lord Crewe wrote to him:

“ Colonial Office,

“ 11 March, 1910.

“ MY DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON,

“ I trust that your rest is setting you thoroughly to rights again; it is a great loss that you have been laid up, and I was particularly sorry that you could not be at the dinner so kindly and generously given to me. Morley made a delightful speech there.

“ I quite agree that it will never do to put forward the Veto Scheme as the final settlement of the House of Lords question; partly by our own fault the position has not been made quite clear to our supporters and the country generally, so that we have to take more time in developing a future policy than would otherwise be the case.

“ I understand that Stanley, your secretary, goes with Herbert Gladstone. One of my men, George Cunningham, I hear is anxious to succeed him with you. He worked with Rosebery formerly and I can strongly recommend him as a trustworthy and capable secretary.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ CREWE.”

The Government at that time was in jeopardy, its days seemed numbered, and we were waiting for the development of events to induce my father to resign his office, and take the rest he so much needed, when that great halt came in public life, caused by the death of King Edward the VII. There was much for the Lord President to do, and his kind friend and colleague, Lord Crewe, who had been doing his work during the last few months, was unable to continue it together with all his own duties. Besides, the time had fully come for my father to relinquish all public work, though there was something very pathetic, to those who were not impatient of it, in the reluctance with which the old statesman laid down the service which had been the goal, the inspiration, the joy of his long public career. He loved it with the enthusiasm of a lover to the end, and when he bid it good-bye his life was over.

On the 13th June, 1910, he went in person to tender his resignation to the Prime Minister, who wrote this exceedingly kind letter that same evening, feeling probably that his old friend might not remember the spoken words, while he could keep and value those which were written.

“ MY DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON,

“ Let me repeat in writing what I endeavoured to say at our interview to-day—that it is a real grief to me to part from so old and valued a colleague and friend, and that I earnestly hope that, after an interval of well-earned rest, you will again be able, as I know you will be eager, to take your place in the fighting line.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ H. H. ASQUITH.”

Many friends wrote to him at this time, and he valued, as he always did, any sign of friendship, but such letters as the following were especially treasured by him as a sign that he had not outlived his welcome among the old friends with whom he had worked for so long. Lord Eversley, a former colleague of his as Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, wrote on June 17th, 1910 :

" 18, Bryanston Square.

" MY DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON,

" I am very sorry to read in the papers that you have been compelled by waning health to resign your post as Lord President. You were one of the old régime who can be very ill-spared from the present Government. The only other two remaining of the Cabinet of 1894 are Asquith and John Morley. I hope you have resigned soon enough to recover your health and to enjoy a ripe old age.

" Yours very truly,

" EVERSLEY."

Mr. Lewis Harcourt also wrote on June 16th, 1910 :

" 14, Berkeley Square.

" MY DEAR LORD WOLVERHAMPTON,

" I must write you one line to express my great regret that our Cabinet association is to come to an end. You have always been very kind to me and I have much valued your confidence and advice. I sincerely trust that a real rest will completely restore your health.

" Yours very sincerely,

" L. HARCOURT."

This letter my father greatly valued as from the son of his old friend and chief, Sir William Harcourt, and also as being from one of the younger men in the Cabinet. Young men do not always express regret when the time of the old ones is past, and perhaps it is not to be expected that they should. Still there is something very fragrant and rare in veneration and respect towards the old and worn-out, attributes much out of fashion and rarely met with in these later days of push and advance. Lord Pentland, another of his younger colleagues, also wrote :

" 16th June, 1910.

" MY DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON,

" As Beauchamp's appointment is announced and the die is finally cast, I must write to say how truly I regret to

think that we shall no longer meet so often as we have in recent years, and how much I for one will miss the chances of talking things over with you which these occasions always so pleasantly afforded. But there is a consolation in thinking and hoping that the reduction and cessation of official and business meetings will multiply and increase the non-official opportunities, and if any one has earned a right to leisure it is surely yourself, after all the years given so generously and strenuously to the public service and to Parliament. I sincerely trust that her ladyship's health improves, and that your own strength is returning.

" Ever yours very sincerely,
" PENTLAND."

Just at this difficult time my father's attention was fortunately diverted by the marriage of his only son to the Hon. Evelyn Wrottesley, only daughter of Lord Wrottesley, who himself died a few months later at the great age of eighty-six.

The two fathers were present at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, on the occasion of the wedding, but they both looked so pathetically frail that it was evident to any onlooker that their days were but labour and sorrow, " so soon passeth it away and we are gone."

On July 1st, 1910, Lord Stamfordham (then Sir Arthur Bigge) wrote the following letter :

" Marlborough House,
" Pall Mall,
" 1st July, 1910.

" MY DEAR LORD WOLVERHAMPTON,

" It was a source of great regret to the King that the condition of your health necessitated your retirement from the Cabinet. His Majesty, however, trusts that you will now be able to enjoy your well-earned rest.

" With regard to the 1851 Commission, important alterations must now be made in its officers. The King is about to nominate Prince Arthur of Connaught as President and a successor must be found to me as secretary. Meanwhile, it

is imperative that there should be at an early date meetings of both the Council and the Board of Management. Under these circumstances His Majesty could not think of your undertaking any work of the Commission, let alone the fatigue of a journey to London. His Majesty, therefore, proposes to appoint Lord Esher as Chairman of the Board of Management. At the same time, His Majesty desires me to convey to you his very highest appreciation of the valuable services which you have rendered to the Commission since you joined it in the year 1889.

" Believe me, yours very truly,

" ARTHUR BIGGE."

To which my father replied on July 8th :

" MY DEAR SIR ARTHUR BIGGE,

" I have to apologize for my delay in acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 1st instant. I highly appreciate the honour the King has conferred upon me, and thank him most gratefully for the kind references which he has made to myself. I think that the selection which His Majesty has made for the Presidency and Chairmanship will be to the advantage of the Commission, and satisfactory alike to those who have taken great interest in its development, and to the public generally. If I can be of any service to His Majesty he may rest assured that I shall, health permitting, be always ready to do everything in my power to uphold and extend the great Institution, which is a permanent memorial of the exhibition of 1851. The reason for this delay is that I had arranged to attend the Privy Council on Wednesday last, and I intended to call upon you in the afternoon, but, in order to catch my train, I was obliged to go direct from Whitehall to Euston.

" Believe me,

" Yours very truly,

" WOLVERHAMPTON."

It was with some difficulty that my father was induced to leave the neighbourhood of London, where he and my mother had been staying for many weeks with my sister, Mrs. Felkin, at Eltham. He was loth to leave the atmosphere of Westminster and Whitehall, as if he felt that he should never come back to them; which, indeed, proved to be the case. We entertained grave fears for the result of the reaction on his vitality, but he bore it better than we expected, and filled his days with a quiet busy-ness which seemed to keep him happy and occupied. My mother's health also at this time materially mended, and they both looked forward to spending the summer in a new house at Overstrand, which my father had just built. It was by a frantic effort that a fair-sized, twenty-roomed house, which was not even pegged out till January, was not only finished, but dried and furnished by the beginning of July, ready for the reception of my parents, who went there on July 29th.

Shortly before he went there he received the following letter from Lord Fitzmaurice :

" Brooks's,
" St. James' Street,
" July 17th, 1910.

" MY DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON,

" I have heard of your resignation with regret, both as an old friend and as a former colleague. You have held a very high place in the esteem of the country, and you have known the Liberal party in its best days. I take this opportunity of thanking you for many acts of kindness and especially a year ago when my health was beginning to fail."

(Lord Fitzmaurice succeeded my father as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and when he was ill the Lord President helped him, and as far as possible did the work of both offices.)

" I feel very anxious about the future of the finances of the country. There seems to be a spirit of absolute recklessness about, and the cry is ' spend, spend.' I wonder what Mr.

Gladstone would have thought of a two hundred million Budget. And yet we are very near this. With kind regards to Lady Wolverhampton, and congratulations on a recent event in your family,

" Believe me,

" Yours sincerely,

" FITZMAURICE."

From time to time in life there seem to come resting-places by the way, where green pastures abound wherein we are led by still waters. Such an one was the summer of 1910, which my father and mother spent with their whole family at Overstrand. The matchless air of that bracing coast revived them both, and my mother especially re-entered into an amount of social life from which recently her ill-health had completely cut her off. Among old friends, and new ones, they spent much pleasant time, but it was in the near home-circle, enriched by the two little grandsons, that my parents found their fullest happiness in those later days. The old statesman and little Gavin Hamilton, who was then five and a half years old, would talk together, and the likeness between the mould of their minds, and their inborn characteristics, was even then so marked that a positive comradeship was created between them. One day my mother noticed a wave of sadness sweep over her husband's face, and, after the manner of wives, she inquired what was the matter. " That I cannot live to see that boy grow up," was the pathetic reply. He was greatly delighted on another occasion when I had been telling my little son the story of Jacob and Esau and had just reached the moral against such obvious deceit, when the child remarked decisively, " I blame the mother," and there was no more for me to say. " He has gone straight to the root of the matter," exclaimed his grandfather. And when we added, " Just what you would have done," he nodded a smiling acquiescence.

My father was not a man for children, he never had been, but the Psalmist knew much of life who wrote that the glory of old men is their children's children. And if that is true of the grandfathers, how much stronger language was required for the

grandmothers! Too strong, perhaps, to find in any tongue. The joy of life came back to my mother in that summer holiday with the children, and all seemed to unite—outside our home circle as well as inside it—in brightening and beautifying that happy time. The late Sir George Lewis continually took my father for little drives, and cheered and interested him by much congenial talk. Mr. Lyttelton, the Headmaster of Eton, whose house was next to ours across the fields, also motored my father to places of interest; and he lunched with Lady Battersea and Mrs. Locker-Lampson, and much enjoyed intercourse with all these old friends. Lord Grenfell came in sometimes to see him, and interested him specially with the account of his journey to Vienna to proclaim the accession of King George V. During the three months at Overstrand my father never missed going to church a single Sunday morning, and he and my mother took the Communion together at Overstrand church more than once. But his friends all saw, and were shocked at, the change in him which a few months had wrought. He, who used to talk so well on every subject, grew silent, and, as the weeks wore on, he experienced difficulty sometimes in finding the word he wanted. "I can't say it," he would exclaim sometimes, and the pathos of that admission seemed especially great in one who had said so much, and said it so well, throughout all his life. As the summer faded into autumn we noticed a distinct change for the worse in my father, both mentally and physically; and the sad thought which had only flitted through our minds before, now fastened on our consciousness that he would never visit his sea-side home again. Perhaps some shrinking from the coming cloud was the motive of my mother's desire to lengthen out that sunny holiday almost into the month of November. She seemed so loth to lose her hold on it and to bring it to an end.

In October a former colleague—Mr. Sydney Buxton—who had taken Mr. Lyttelton's house, came to see my father, who liked to hear the Government gossip and to touch on questions of the day. But his grasp was gone, and every day he stood further away from any real activity, though a certain restlessness was beginning, which never again left him.

On the 27th October I took my parents back to Woodthorne



LORD WOLVERHAMPTON AND HIS GRANDSON, GAVIN
HAMILTON

and stayed with them for about a fortnight. My mother was in much better health than she had been for the last year or two, but my father's heart was very feeble and his circulation most unsatisfactory. When the day came for the children to leave them, and come home, my mother's grief was abnormal. They had been with her for over three months, and though she had always made a trouble of parting from them, there was something extraordinary in her bitter cry that time : " I shall never see them again." And she never did.

CHAPTER XXXIII

LAST DAYS

“ ‘Till death us do part ’ ‘Till death us do join past parting—
That sounds like betrothal indeed ! ”

BROWNING.

“ They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.”—*II. Samuel.*

FROM November to Christmas of 1910 my father again improved greatly in health, and the doctors thought that his increased strength might last him for months, and perhaps for years. He drove daily up to Wolverhampton, where he had a room in his old offices, and transacted some sort of business, though probably purely nominal, with his secretary. Just at the close of the New Year of 1911, there fell upon him a severe attack of my mother, from which he could not recover. She who had been so much better, suddenly failed, and from several little strokes, almost imperceptible at the time, she never rallied. Every day of that last, sad week, we were trying to prepare my father for the worst, but he kept hoping on, and would not see that she was really going. He never would see, all through his life, that which he did not want to see; and that attitude had proved more of a friend to him than an enemy. On the 6th January she passed away, and her husband's prostration of grief was so complete, that the doctor did not think that he would live through the day.

Mercifully the frail grasp of old age cannot grip a great sorrow for long at a time, and there came interludes when he seemed to have forgotten the actual fact, though he kept complaining of

a great darkness which he felt was overwhelming him. He was confined to his bed, but his attacks of collapse were intermittent, and between whiles he would have read to him every letter and newspaper that mentioned my mother's name. The letters of countless friends from every one of his worlds pleased and interested him. He greatly appreciated the gracious telegram which the King sent to him : " I am deeply grieved to hear of the irreparable loss which you have sustained, and I offer you my heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.—GEORGE R. I." and had it continually repeated. . . . He also showed a lively interest in such kind letters as the following which my sister received :

" Privy Council Office,

" Whitehall,

" January 9th, 1911.

" DEAR MRS. FELKIN,

" You will know, without my assuring you of it, how deeply and sincerely we feel for you all. Your mother's name is associated in our house with nothing but kind, cheerful, and may I say, affectionate memories. I fear the severance from the companion of his life upon your father. If you think well, please tell him how much we think of him, and how warmly we sympathize—we do so indeed,

" Your sincere friend,

" M."

(Lord Morley of Blackburn.)

" Rosebery,

" Gorebridge,

" Midlothian.

" DEAR MRS. FELKIN,

" I should have telegraphed to your father when I read of your mother's death, had I not been informed that he was too ill to receive messages. This line therefore is only to beg you, if there should be an opportunity, to assure my dear old friend of my true sympathy in his grievous

bereavement, and to ask you and your sister to accept the same proffer. It is sad indeed to think of one gone while the other is prostrate

"Yours sincerely,

"R."

(Lord Rosebery.)

"India Office,

"13th January, 1911.

"DEAR MRS. FELKIN,

"I hope that you are satisfied with the progress which your father is making, as I saw with relief a better account in the newspapers. I shall be grateful if you will give him my warmest regards and an assurance of my deep sympathy in the sorrow which has befallen him and you all. Yours has been, I know, the happiest of homes, and I can imagine how complete the break-up must be, after so many years of companionship and union.

"Yours sincerely,

"CREWE."

His mind was quick to appreciate the many letters received from his former colleagues and many other friends, and alert to notice those who had not written, and from whom he expected to have heard, though from the newspaper accounts of his health they probably thought he was too ill to receive letters. So he was in one way; but in another, he never stepped outside the arena of active every-day life until his last gleam of consciousness was gone. Sir Robert Simon, M.D., came over from Birmingham in consultation on January 9th, as we thought it quite possible that medical assistance would be required to prevent his attending the funeral on the 11th, but he never asked a word about it, and only apparently realized the fact of it when my husband told him quite quietly and simply all about it in the evening of the day on which it had taken place. My sister-in-law went up to see him when she arrived for the funeral, and he spoke to her first about the death of her father, Lord Wrottesley,

the preceding week, and then added : " You know we have had a great sorrow, too." Great gusts of grief kept sweeping over him, but my husband would calm and comfort him with the present help of prayer, and then he would drift away into a dulled quietness wherein the sharp sorrow was blunted, and the keen realization blurred. In a week's time he was downstairs again, and for the next month he seemed somewhat to improve in health, but his mental powers waxed and waned with every physical change. They were entirely dependent upon his circulation, as there was no affection of the brain whatever ; but when the heart failed, the circulation through the brain slowed down, and was apt to block. An injection of strychnine would make him quite himself again for a time, and he could even understand and transact necessary business until its effect had passed away. About a fortnight before his death, when he came down to breakfast as usual, he suddenly asked us how my mother was, and why we had not been up to see her that morning ? We knew that this was a very bad sign, as some further block in the brain must have taken place, and from that time he was consumed by an intense restlessness and an utter oblivion of time and all conditions of his present state of life. He was perpetually pressing to go on some journey, to attend some meeting, to preside at some council, to make some speech ; and then not recognizing any longer where he was he would say that he must " go home." Day and night ceased to be divided, and he would order his carriage or his meals at any hour of either. He had worked all his life—he could not cease from work till the actual end came. He would come downstairs, he would go out of doors, even when he was a dying man—and he was intensely impatient of any restraint which seemed to come between him and what he thought was still his duty. When my brother read him a telegram from the King inquiring how he was, he answered : " Better !—say I am much better " ; and then he expressed his appreciation of His Majesty's remembering to ask about him. Shortly afterwards he said to his son : " I can't understand where your mother is, and why I can't see her ? " and when the reply came : " You will see her quite soon now, and then you will understand everything," he seemed content and only

repeated: "Are you sure?" and received the "Quite sure" with a sigh of relief.

The last words which my father spoke on this earth were characteristic of his life of service and his loyal sense of duty. He tried to leave his bed and when the nurse remonstrated, he said : " Don't keep me. I must go. The King has sent for me, and I must not keep the King waiting."

Truly it was a King Who had summoned His servant, and he passed into His Presence on February 25th, 1911, after a few days of complete unconsciousness.

The Press had much to say on the death of Lord Wolverhampton. His personality had stamped itself on the history of his day, and especially on the history of his Church of which he was so devoted and so distinguished a member.

His friends had little to say, for in the face of a real loss there is little to be said. Just a few words such as the following out of a pile of kindly letters :

"Mentmore.

"Leighton Buzzard.

[illegible]

"DEAR MRS. FELKIN.

"So the end has come, I doubt not, a peaceful and blessed release after long illness and the recent severance. But to you and your sister and brother it comes as a sharp break with a happy past, and so I cannot but intrude on your sorrow with one line of the sincerest sympathy and regret.

"Yours very truly,

"ROSEBERY."

And from his old friend and colleague in America, Mr. Bryce :

" March 23rd, 1911.

" DEAR MRS. FELKIN.

" My wife and I have been deeply grieved to hear of the two bereavements that have come in such quick succession upon your family, and we hope you will allow us to

convey to you our sincere sympathy. I had written to your father, when, after returning hither from S. America, we heard of your dear mother's death; but probably he never got my letter, as I fear he was ill for some time himself, and had the inexpressible sorrow of parting from the cherished companion of his long life. We hope that the recollection of two parents who were so much to you, and to ~~me~~ another, may bring some slight consolation to you in your sorrow, for those whom we most loved are in a sense always with us.

" Believe me sincerely yours,
" JAMES BRYCE."

In politics he will always be remembered as one of the old Liberals who link Gladstonian days with those of King Edward's Liberal Government. He will be remembered as a wise, and fair, and moderate statesman, whose life's work and ambition were expressed in the few words which His Majesty telegraphed to my brother on hearing of our loss. "I have received with deep regret the sad news of the death of your father, who, for so many years, faithfully served his Sovereign and country, and desire to ~~express my sincere~~ sympathy with you and your family in your sorrow.—GEORGE R. I." He indeed faithfully served his King, his country and his God.

In Wesleyan Methodism his position is, and ever will be, unique. He was the first Wesleyan to enter the Government and the Cabinet, to be a Secretary of State, and to be created a peer. And in spite of all the upward progress of his political and social life he never outgrew the faith of his fathers, or disowned the Church in which he had been born. And it is no unusual thing for a man to become too clever for creeds, too advanced for his religious inheritance, too grand for nonconformity in any shape or form. But my father was too large-souled a man ever to be influenced by cheap motives—too great a man ever to sink to the smallness of pretence or the shoddy of pretentiousness. And more than that he loved Methodism with a singularly strong and loyal affection, and gloried in any service which he could render it, or in any lustre

his career reflected on it. He was a perfect type of a class passing away. Not a self-made man, as the term implies : a self-developed man and a self-dedicated man. Inheriting culture and good breeding he built up on them a career of distinction and honour, and, as his friend prophesied of him so long ago, "He went far." His place is filled up, as all men's places are as time rolls by, but there are many homes in England, where the interests of politics, of society, of friendship, and of Methodism, all claim a share in the personality of the man who was best known to his day and generation as Henry Fowler.

The scene of his funeral was singularly appropriate and impressive. For the mile from his home to Tettenhall churchyard the roads were lined with people, and vast crowds, chiefly of men, gathered round his last resting-place. The sun shone brightly on the massed flowers; and the hymns "Come let us join our friends above" and "Ten thousand times ten thousand" rang out in tones of triumph and in no minor key. He always loved colour, and a great scarlet wreath of flowers lay upon the centre of the coffin. As we stood at the mouth of the grave, looking down the slopes on to the sea of upturned faces and uncovered heads, it seemed as if one of his old mass-meetings had come out to bid him farewell; and, as the Bishop of Lichfield turned to the people, my father's voice seemed to speak once more to the men and women of Wolverhampton in a silent benediction, higher and more sure than any good which he had worked and striven to win them in the days that were vanished and gone.

THE END

